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MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COIN-OPERATED ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

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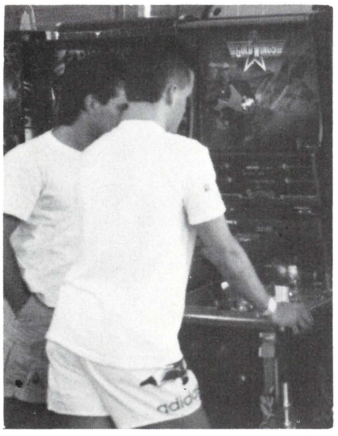

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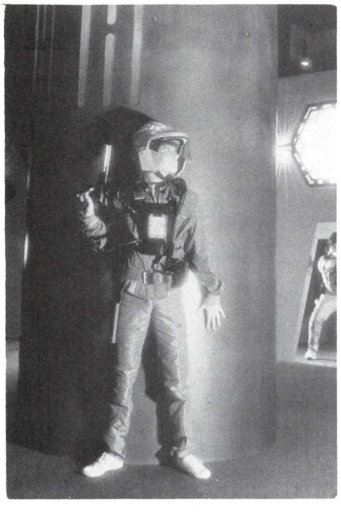

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FEATURES

Arcades: Is the Magic Back? **12**

Back in the ill-fated video boom days the most popular way for non-industry people to get into the coin-op industry, with the hope of making lots of easy money, was by opening arcades. Many cities were deluged by game rooms, too often run by those who didn't know what they were doing. Obviously, it had to end and happily the fly-by-nighters sought other avenues for their business ventures. Play Meter takes a look at how those who operate arcades and game rooms today feel about the industry and their businesses in particular.

Art Imitates Life, Life Imitates Art **20**

Game players seem fascinated by the new interactive, player participation environments such as Photon and Laser Tag. Last month we did a feature on Blaster Tag, and this time Roger Sharpe looks into why this new phenomenon is so popular.

Operators go to Washington **36**

For the second year in a row, AMOA has sponsored its Government Affairs Conference in Washington D.C. as a means of contacting government representatives to acquaint them with this industry. Operators met with their senators and congressmen to share the coin-op industry's goals and problems. This year was even better than the first and many are already looking forward to next year. See what it's all about in this wrap-up.

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On the cover are Data East's (clockwise from top) Sue Jarocki, John Barone, Steve Walton, and Jeff Walker with their new game *Gondomania*.

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The Washington Connection

Following on the heels of its successful predecessor, the first AMOA Government Affairs Conference of 1986, this year's event recorded even better attendance and subsequently further cemented a line of communication between our industry and the powers that be in national government.

Statistics for 1987 surpassed those of 1986, indicating an increased awareness of the occasion's value by members of the amusement community. Last year John Estridge, a past AMOA president, summed up the purpose of the conference when he said, "Our main objective was to establish contacts and learn our way around. In the past we have often reacted to legislation instead of being in a positive posture...once you have your organization in place you are better able to influence changes in laws at a national level." Now that our presence has been felt nationally, let us continue to increase our representation every year and carry this awareness and educational activity out on the local level as well.

The benefits of making our industry's feelings felt on legislation affecting our wallets has been brought home most recently with the situation in Arizona where the state legislature passed a new law redefining "amusement gambling" and "gambling". At first considered a threat to video and pinball operation as well as other equipment, it has now been established by the office of the attorney general of Arizona that the law affects cranes, rotary merchandisers, and Skee-Ball units since these offer the lure of a prize. One Arizona operator said his business would be severely crippled by this legislation as Skee-Ball units represent the major portion of his amusement investment. Operators who added cranes to their inventories because locations were asking for them may be left with a surplus of equipment not saleable in their area.

How difficult will it be to rescind this law? Certainly more time consuming and costly than preventive measures. The wheels are now set in motion, with attorneys feverishly trying to stop implementation of the law (due July 19). Here our industry is in a negative posture, fighting after the fact; assuming a defensive position instead of taking the lead and establishing a positive one by making our presence known on a local level. A state association not very active for the last two years is now becoming more active and its list of members is increasing. Vigilance will probably now become the watchword.

It's a lesson to be learned in every state. Take preventive action. Strong operator representation on a local government level needs to be a top priority. Laws adversely affecting our business in one state could set a precedent in others. None of us are immune. State associations and operators must become more politically astute. Help local politicians running for office so you have a friendly ear when legislation is proposed against your business.

Of late, operators with cigarette vending equipment have had to fight proposed legislation in some cities, for example in Topeka, Kan., where attempts were made in 1986 to ban the sale of cigarettes from vending machines based on the erroneous assumption that teenagers buy cigarettes from those machines. Action had to be taken on a local level to inform officials of the true facts and block passage of legislation detrimental to Kansas operators.

The Washington Conference, supported by active state associations and individual operators keeping abreast of proposed legislation in their areas, can do much to remedy gaps that exist between our industry and government.

Bonnie Theard

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

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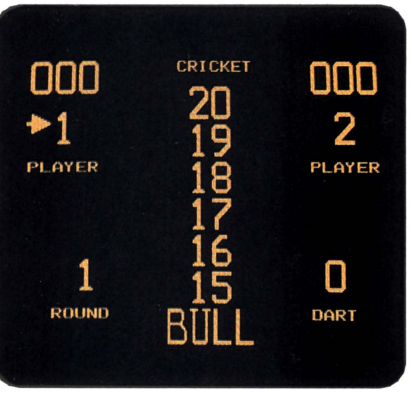
To own a number, 3 darts must be scored in that particular number. A dart in the triple ring scores 3, in the doubles ring scores 2, and single 1. After the number is owned, all hits in that number score the numerical value of the number. The player owning the number continues scoring with each hit until the opponent closes the number by also hitting it 3 times. Once a number is closed, neither player may score on that number — it has been eliminated from the game.

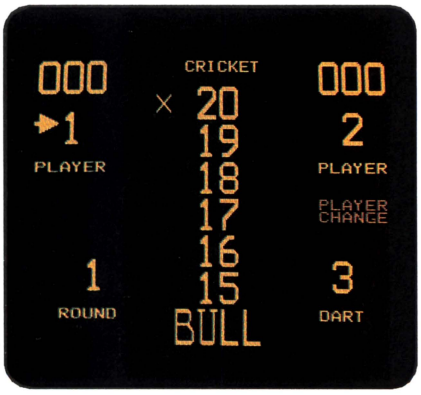
Example: Player 1 throws 3 darts hitting two single 20's and a non-scoring number, he has scored 2 marks on 20 (see screen #2). Player 2 then throws 3 darts hitting a triple 20, a double 20, and a non-scoring number. Player 2 now owns the 20 (by scoring 3 with the triple) and has scored 40 points (by hitting the double) (see screen #3).

Player 1 then may choose to close the 20 by hitting it the one time needed, or may throw at another open number in an attempt to gain it's control for scoring.

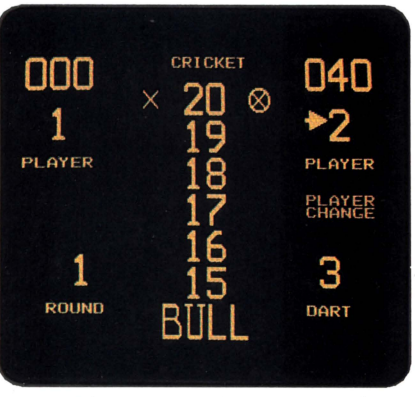
The game ends when a player closes or owns all his numbers and has a higher point total (see screen #4).



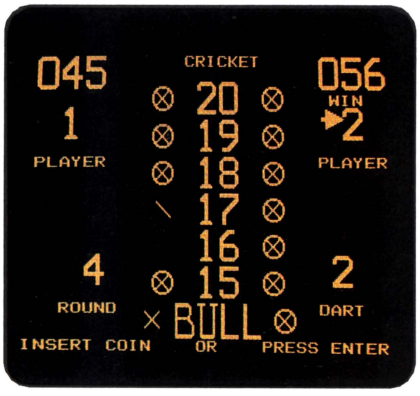
1 Cricket score board



2 Two hits in the 20



3 Player 2 with control of the 20 and a score of 40



4 Player 2 wins the Game

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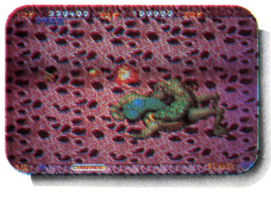

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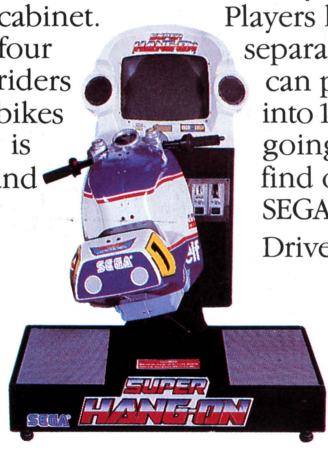

Players get ultimate realism with the "lay down" steering featured on SUPER HANG-ON's mini ride-on cabinet.

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SUPER HANG-ON

ARCADES: IS THE MAGIC BACK ?

BY RUSTY STORBECK

When industry revenues plunged a few years back, arcades were hit hard. Now that the industry is in a recovery phase, how are the arcades doing? Play Meter decided to take the industry's temperature, as it were, and find out. We talked with arcade operators around the country, and asked them how they're doing and how they do it. Here's what they--the survivors--told us.

Although there have been some exceptional pins introduced, few arcades consider them a major asset.

Cecil Lamberson opened the Fun City Arcade in a small shopping center in south Memphis in 1974. It's on a busy thoroughfare, but it's within a few blocks of 8,000 low-income apartments. At first glance, Fun City would seem hard-pressed to live up to its name. Lamberson doesn't mince words about it: "It's a ghetto location." If he senses some well-intentioned concern on your part, however, he'll set you straight. "I'll tell you what," Lamberson says. "If you gave me an arcade in some of the more affluent parts of the city, with no rent, I wouldn't take it." Why not? A lot has to do with economics--his and his customers'. His collections are up. He explains it this way.

Kids in the more affluent areas of Memphis, Lamberson says, just don't seem to be interested in the games anymore. They have more money, which translates to more choices. They can get $5 to go to the movies, or wherever. Lamberson's customers, on the other hand, have less money, and therefore fewer choices. The result? Lamberson's arcade is often jammed until 4 A.M. on the weekend with several hundred customers.

Does Lamberson advertise? Does he do promotions? Absolutely not. He just doesn't need to. He simply keeps the arcade open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. And, he says, he prices his product "in the range of my customers." Most of the games in his store are a quarter a play. He says he gets a lot of repeat customers.

Lamberson likes the new games that are out ("I'm different from my contemporaries"). He says he finds them fairly priced, and the variety allows an operator to be selective and get good pieces.

Like many arcade operators, Lamberson has a route, and his arcade doubles as a warehouse. He's able to rotate his equipment regularly. Lamberson buys new equipment for the arcade every two or three weeks, he says. He prefers new games over kits, and he's able to get his money out of games fairly quickly at the arcade, because there's no commission split to cut into collections.

Eighty percent of Lamberson's games are videos, because, in his words, they're a "lot easier to operate." A video, he

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says, can be taken apart and cleaned in 15 minutes. A pin, he says, takes half a day.

If the number of employees in a business is any indication of its health, Lamberson's shop would seem to be in good shape. He employs 15 people in the arcade, a number that jumps to 27 when you count maintenance men.

At one time, Lamberson had an interest in four other arcades, arcades that, for one reason or another, had to be closed. Fun City certainly felt the effects of the industry's hard times, he says, but it held steady throughout. Why was it able to hold on? Ironically enough, Lamberson quotes the well-known tenet of real estate: "Location, location, location."

Merritt Cravens is another who managed to stay afloat when many arcades were sinking. In fact, he says his Cravens Arcade has never really seen lean times. Collections are up, and they've been rising steadily since he opened several years ago.

Cravens attributes his arcade's success, in large part, to his philosophy about what kinds of games a shop needs. Two words sum up his criteria: *the best.* He keeps close tabs on game standings and buys what people want to play. Most of his games are videos, but he has one *Pinbot* and says he expects to be getting an *F-14 Tomcat* soon. Cravens buys four or five games at a time. He's added nine since December.

Cravens Arcade is small by many standards--it has only 34 games--but it's unique in another way. It's part of the biggest laundromat in the state of Illinois ("At least, some say it's the biggest," Cravens says). That's a business that Cravens has been in for 17 years. When he put up his new building six years ago, ostensibly for a laundromat, he decided to set up an arcade in one end of it. He installed four machines (games, not washers), and had expanded within six months. It's been gangbusters ever since.

Not surprisingly, the players in his arcade are anywhere from two years of age to somewhere in the 80s. "Two or three of the old men who come in to play," he says, "are at least 85." In the beginning, two-thirds of his arcade clientele were there to do their laundry. Now only a half of them bring their dirty socks with them when they step into the building.

Does Cravens advertise? Only in publications like local shoppers' guides. He's not at all sold on advertising; good games and a clean place (he runs the arcade "awfully strict") are more beneficial, in his opinion. One bit of in-store promotion he does do is give away at least 1,000 plays a year to the children of his laundromat patrons.

Does the laundry room help the gameroom? Somewhat. But according to Cravens, it's more the other way around. "The arcade," he says, "keeps me in business."

Manuel Vallarino owns and operates Arcades International, an 80 x 100-foot space in a recreational-vehicle family campground in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. At one time, the plural in his business's name signified that he had three arcades. Last year, however, "a lack of interest," as he puts it, forced him to close down two of them--one in an amusement park and the other in a shopping strip.

The arcade that's left--is it doing well? "To make a long story short," Vallarino gives a quick history of his collections: in '83, down 23 percent from the previous year; in '84, down 10 percent; in '85, down five percent; in '86, *up* eight percent; and in '87, again up eight percent. Why the upturn? Vallarino says there's a new generation of kids who've never seen videos. In fact, to make his point, he explains that he's tapered off his purchases in the past year or so. So the reversal in his collections, he says, has nothing to do with new games.

Vallarino uses no promotions in his arcade--he's got a captive audience--but he does run a snack bar (as a separate business) and he does have a variety of pieces that cater to various age groups. Foosball and air hockey tables round off an equipment pool that includes some 70 video games. Eleven pool tables, he says, account for seven to eight percent of his collections. The only games you won't find in Vallarino's arcade are pinballs. When he did have them, he says, they didn't get a lot of play. With purchase prices getting higher and higher, he decided against them.

Vallarino echoed a sentiment that other operators hold, and that's that kits are priced too high. He feels that manufacturers should set a price ceiling at a point much lower than what the kits cost now.

When Harry Peck and his brother set up Family Amusement Corporation about 16 years ago in Los Angeles, they also opened a number of arcades. In the mid-70s, however, Peck and his brother decided to close all but one. That one is called the Family Arcade, and it has about 150 games--"everything," Peck says, "from pins and videos to foosball, cranes, and even ping pong tables."

Videos account for easily more than 100 of the pieces on the floor at any given time. Peck says he has a lot of current product. In fact, Family Amusement Corporation uses the arcade to test games for manufacturers like Romstar and Williams. It's not unusual, Peck says, for operators to come to his arcade to see product that hasn't made it to the street yet.

Peck, however, says his arcade is atypical. Operating some 1,200 machines, the corporation uses the arcade as a staging area for its route. Peck calls it a "working warehouse."

That should tell you how he buys. In quantity. And daily. Whenever he needs new equipment, Peck says. Right now he has 15 *Roadblasters* on the floor. Current product always does well, he says. One thing, though, Peck says is that certain staples never seem to die--he always has a wall of five or six *Ms. Pac Mans* working. Or *Galagas.*

What about new equipment prices? Yes, they're high, but he's not complaining--they've always had to pay good money for good games. But kits, he says, do seem to be edging up to a high level in price, something he thinks manufacturers are doing to encourage the purchase of dedicated games. Why buy a kit, he asks, when for not that much more, you can get a new machine, which looks so much better and has a good resale value? It's the depreciation factor.

Does Peck have auxiliary services, like a snack bar? No, his

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What about collections? They're up, he says, on a steady rise. He says this is turning out to be one of the better years his arcade has had.

What enabled him to make it through the bust times? A sound business philosophy that he says he's had since the beginning: never buy unless it's out of your cash flow. If you have to borrow to buy a machine, he says, you're doing something wrong.

But Peck also lists three things that he considers vital to the operation of an arcade: good employees; clean, working games; and an arcade atmosphere that lends itself to comfort and security. "Nobody wants to play," he says only half-jokingly, "if they think they're going to get mugged."

What about the big boys, though? How are they doing? Jane Adkins is director of operations of Take 10 Corporation, a 12-year-old company that has 18 arcade locations in malls in six states. Take 10 operates between 900 and 1,000 pieces.

Is the arcade industry getting back on its feet? According to Adkins, yes. She says she's seen a "turnaround in the industry" in the past year or so, in terms of both collections and image. The volume of Take 10's collections has been increasing, she says, and arcades are coming to be accepted by more and more mall developers.

Take 10 opened its first store in Ashville, North Carolina, in 1975. The company's philosophy is simple. "We sell fun," Adkins says. "We sell entertainment." But it actually goes at least a step beyond being merely an entertainment broker or a purveyor of fun. Like many other arcades today, this Charlotte-based company aims at establishing what Adkins calls "a family atmosphere." She adds: "We try to get to know our customers on a first-name basis."

This extra effort carries with it "clean and inviting gamerooms" where there's no smoking, drinking, or eating. A family gameroom, Adkins stresses, can't be a "dark, dingy hole-in-the-wall."

Other important ingredients for a successful arcade, Adkins says, are good management and good equipment. When Play Meter asked what kinds of equipment Take 10 buys, Adkins replied: "We try to have something for everyone." She made it clear, however, that Take 10, in gearing its operation toward the family, steers away from so-called adult games. If games were rated like the movies, she says, Take 10 would go for the "PG-rated."

Adkins also says that 30-50 percent of Take 10's equipment is rotated on a weekly to monthly basis.

Promotions? Does Take 10 believe in promotions? Yes, Adkins says. But she guards that information carefully: "You wouldn't want me to tell my competitors what we're doing, would you now?"

Malibu Grand Prix is a family entertainment and recreation chain that's headquartered in Los Angeles. Gary Rudolph is senior vice president, and he's been with the company for eleven years. Rudolph says Malibu Grand Prix has more than 40 locations and operates more than 3,000 games. The centers are peppered all across the country, "from Hawaii to Florida, from Oregon to New Jersey." Rudolph says there are even franchises in Canada, Australia, and Saudi Arabia.

How are collections with Malibu Grand Prix? For the past 18 months, Rudolph says, they've been going up. Why? Because, Rudolph says, the competition is not as tough as it was just a few years ago, and the survivors of the industry shake-out are stronger for it. Product is of a better quality these days, he says, and the variety of product has given operators good pins, good videos, and cranes. Malibu Grand Prix operates 135-150 cranes.

What helped Malibu Grand Prix make it through the shake-out? Rudolph points out that the Malibu Grand Prix centers are family entertainment and recreations locations that include miniature golf courses, racetracks, batting cages, and bumper boat ponds. The downtrend that the industry experienced affected the chain's revenues, but, he says, although the arcade end of the operation at one time accounted for as much as 44 percent of the company's revenues, the chain didn't have all its eggs in one basket.

Even so, Malibu Grand Prix arcades today make up 35 percent of the company's revenues, or a not-to-be-sneezed-at $10 million a year.

Rudolph buys four times a year: for the Christmas break, the spring break, the summer, and the fall ("a light buy for a new look between the end of summer and the Christmas buy").

Does he advertise? No. "We're a destination point for recreation and leisure activities," Rudolph says. In layman's terms, people come to the centers for all kinds of activity. Since the games are there, they play them. Besides, Rudolph says, the majority of Malibu Grand Prix centers are located on major highways and are, in his words, "freeway-visible." He also explains that the company had an advertising budget "in excess of $2 million a year" until 1985. When the budget was dropped, however, revenues continued to rise, Rudolph says. He concluded that advertising was not "cost-effective" for Malibu Grand Prix.

There are, of course, bigger chains yet. Play Meter contacted Time-Out, an arcade chain purchased by Sega last December and one that claims to be "the third largest arcade operation in the United States." A high-level spokesman we talked with was unwilling to discuss the company's operation, so we have no way of knowing how this year's revenues are running against last year's, listed as $23 million just a few months back in an interview with the company's founder, Tico Bonomo. Based on that interview, Play Meter reported in its February 1987 issue that Time-Out has 74 arcades in 15 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Bonomo said then that Time-Out plans to double its sales over the next three years and will be "very acquisition-minded."

Mark Whittaker, national sales development manager for the Aladdin's Castle chain, didn't mind chatting at all. He calls the

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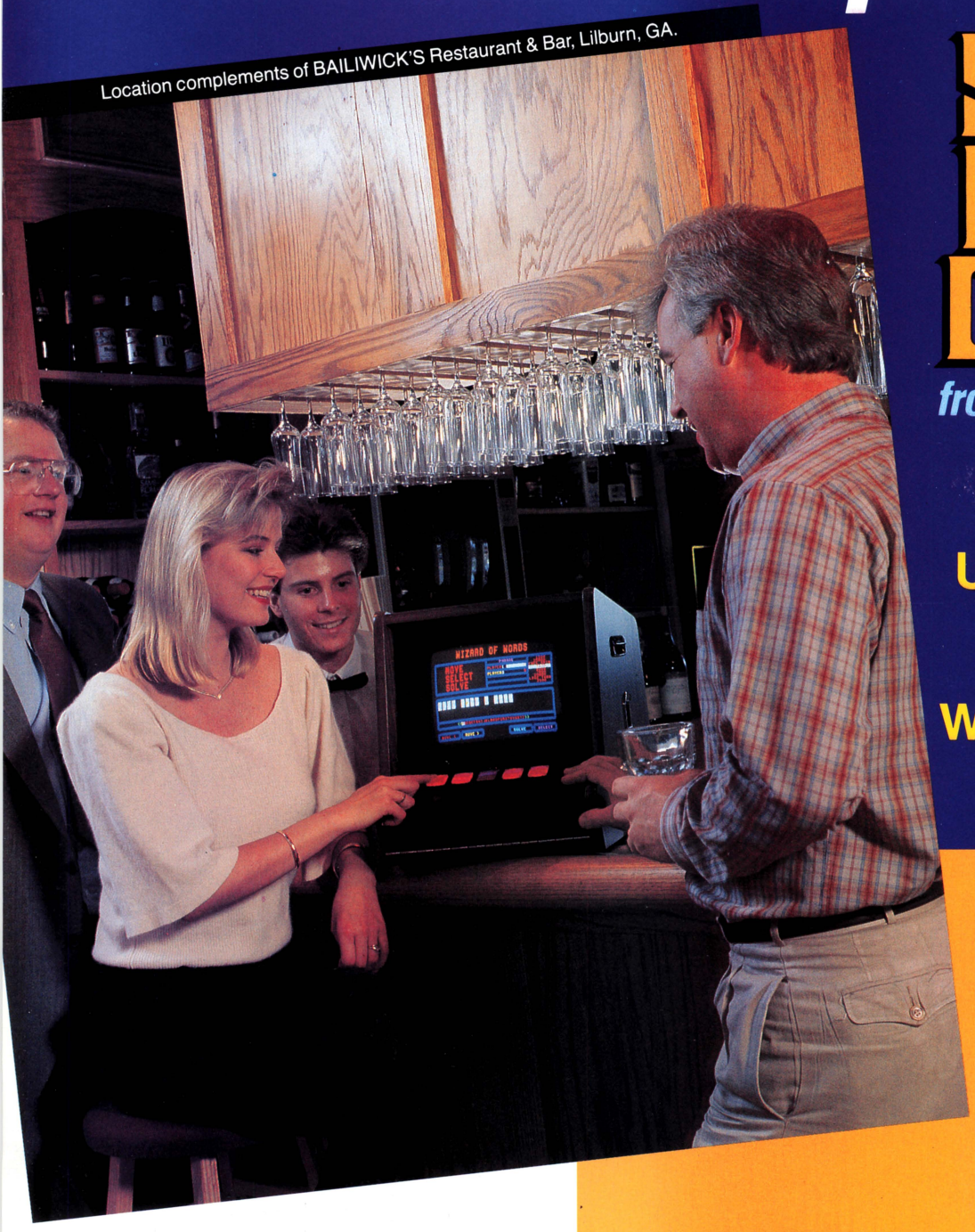

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Bally subsidiary "by far the leading chain of video fun centers." Aladdin's Castle occupies more than 300 locations in 46 states and operates a mind-boggling 20,000 games.

Is Aladdin's Castle doing well? Yes, according to Whittaker, who says the company is "looking to expand." And to what does he attribute the company's well-being? Whittaker talks a lot about things like "sophisticated central management structure" and "advanced accounting and cash control systems," but his answers become more wieldy when he points out that Aladdin's Castle takes pride in its "clean, well-maintained family fun centers," which, he says, are located primarily in major shopping malls. Malls, *family* fun centers, cleanliness--hmmm, those are beginning to sound familiar.

Whittaker explains that Aladdin's Castle has written good community relations into its company policy. "Our locations," he says,"are more than just rooms full of games. We have a wide variety of national programs, and our involvement with the local community makes Aladdin's Castle truly unique in the industry."

What kinds of involvement? School incentive programs, for example, and fund-raising programs for church groups, scouts, and Little League, to name a few. Nationally, Aladdin's Castle has joined forces with the Hide and Seek Foundation, the March of Dimes, M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), and S.A.D.D. (Students Against Driving Drunk). In fact, the chain recently received an award from the White House for its role in the "Be Smart, Don't Start--Just Say No" campaign, which is aimed at preventing substance abuse among pre-teenagers.

Whittaker explains that Aladdin's Castle takes a positive view of promotions. Its philosophy on the subject: Generate excitement, bring the customers in, increase spending, and bring the customers *back*. Birthday parties, private parties, "open house" promotions, and cross-promotions (with other merchants) are all calculated to do just that. Whittaker, who teaches a seminar called "How promotional activities can boost your bottom line," puts it this way: "The biggest misconception about arcades today that I've seen is that you can run the business like you did years ago, which is, put the games in and open the door. In reality, you have to have a program that will generate customer interest and will uplift the image of the industry." But he sums it all up with a little advice that a lot of arcade owners might do well to at least consider: "You need," Whittaker says, "a little pizzazz."

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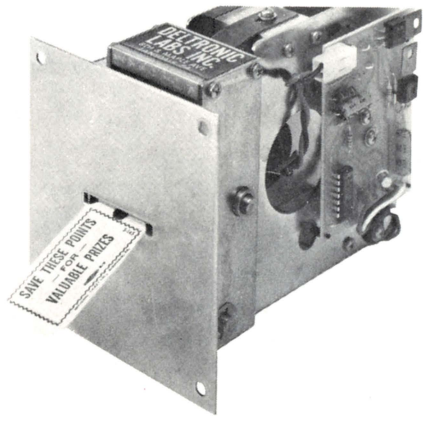

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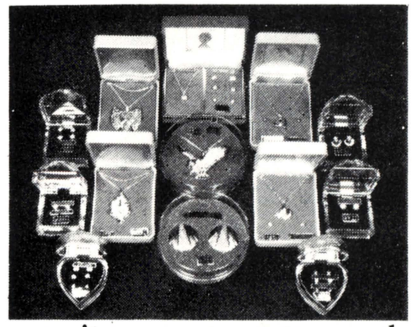

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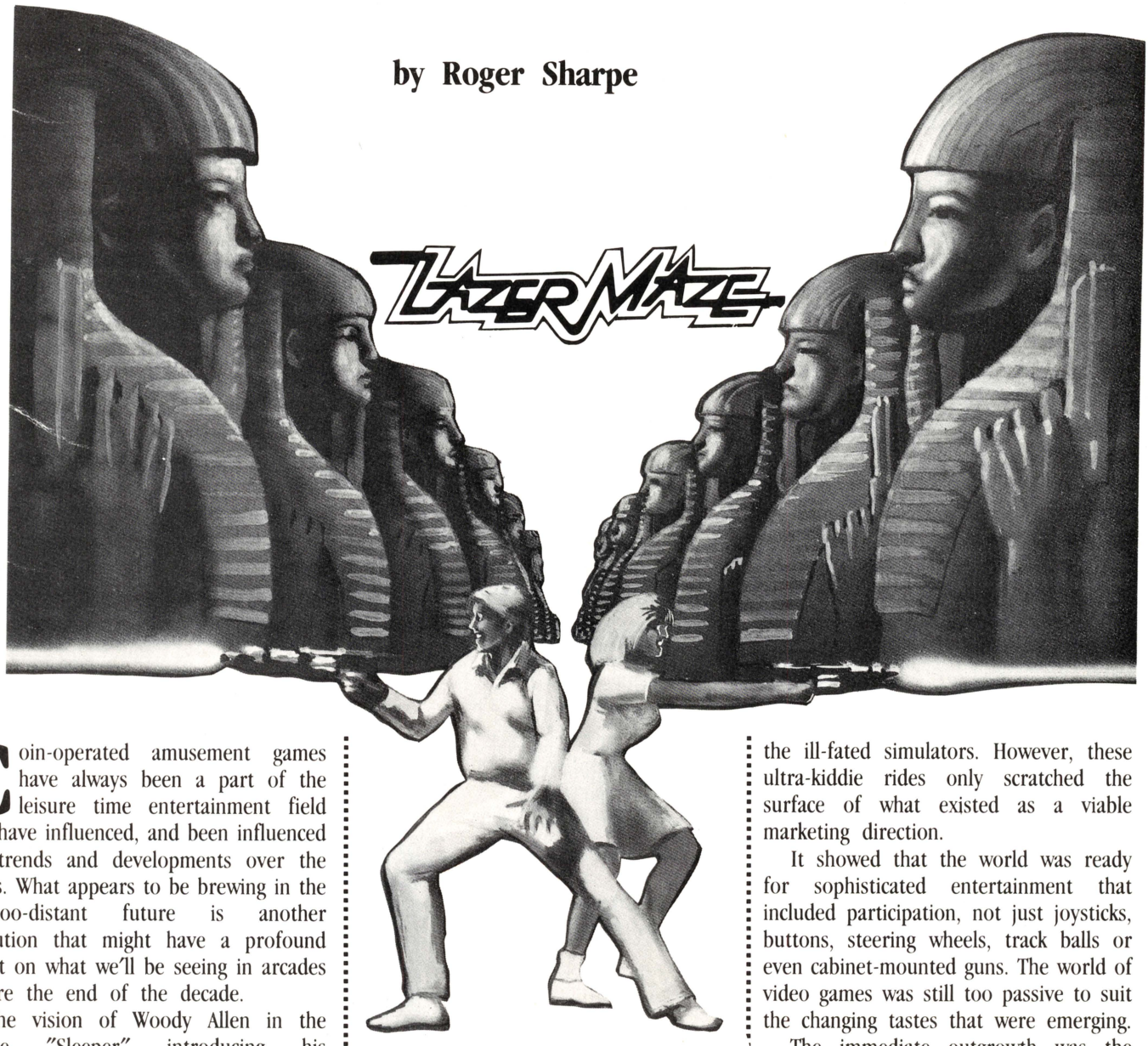
ART IMITATES LIFE LIFE IMITATES ART

by Roger Sharpe



Coin-operated amusement games have always been a part of the leisure time entertainment field and have influenced, and been influenced by, trends and developments over the years. What appears to be brewing in the not-too-distant future is another evolution that might have a profound effect on what we'll be seeing in arcades before the end of the decade.

The vision of Woody Allen in the movie "Sleeper" introducing his orgasmatron or Westworld starring Yul Brynner as a robot gone mad, at least showed imagination in entertainment that would be real, lifelike, and totally experimental. It was fantasy almost ten years ago when these movies hit the big screen, but today's technology might allow us to enjoy these types of diversions and even more.

Today, developments in the toy industry are redefining the old notion of cowboys and indians or capture the flag. The difference is the excitement tends to be happening as a cause and effect to continually satisfy an insatiable audience. In fact, not too long ago weekend survival camps popped up and offered a realistic experience of combat in the woods.

The reasoning might well follow, why be satisfied with the small screen scenarios when you can escape to an environment that puts you directly in the action. Interestingly, an outgrowth was the ill-fated simulators. However, these ultra-kiddie rides only scratched the surface of what existed as a viable marketing direction.

It showed that the world was ready for sophisticated entertainment that included participation, not just joysticks, buttons, steering wheels, track balls or even cabinet-mounted guns. The world of video games was still too passive to suit the changing tastes that were emerging.

The immediate outgrowth was the introduction of the hottest selling toy category for Christmas, 1986--laser gun sets. Led by Photon and Lazer Tag, the latter from Worlds of Wonder maker of Teddy Ruxpin, were quickly joined by a number of direct knock-offs and imitators. The movement was in full swing, thanks to some incredible advertising expenditures and television shows tied into the products. Special guns, helmets, a chest indicator, and other items seemed to be the new

playthings for the Dungeons and Dragons generation.

Coin-op, meanwhile, remained a world apart. But home video game systems were blazing new trails led by Nintendo, Sega, and Atari. And the battle in the months ahead, looks to be an all out war for consumer dollars and inevitable changes in the shape, form and presentation of coin-operated amusement games.

One area that undoubtedly will affect game designers and programmers is going to be the new era in television interactivity that will be unveiled this fall. Youngsters will be able to interact with their television sets previously possible only with a personal computer or a game system. Mattel's *Captain Power* and *Soldiers of the Future*, along with Nolan Bushnell's Axlon company, that will be releasing ,*Tech Force* and the *Moto Monsters*, promises to revolutionize the fantasy/play world. With toys that will fire back at images on the screen, the question is whether arcade games will be enough to complete against the wizardry of the home TV screen.

But the erosion potential of the coin-op industry, and the real focus of this article, is game room environment. The majority of locations are a time warp of the 1950's, with linoleum floors and walls that have seen better days. And, although, we have witnessed the addition of carpeting, indirect lighting, and more modern appearances, the game room stigma remains a constant eyesore to the showcasing of new, $3,000-and-up equipment. In fact, the games themselves often seem to be an after-thought with the two elements often being a curious paradox of the new and old.

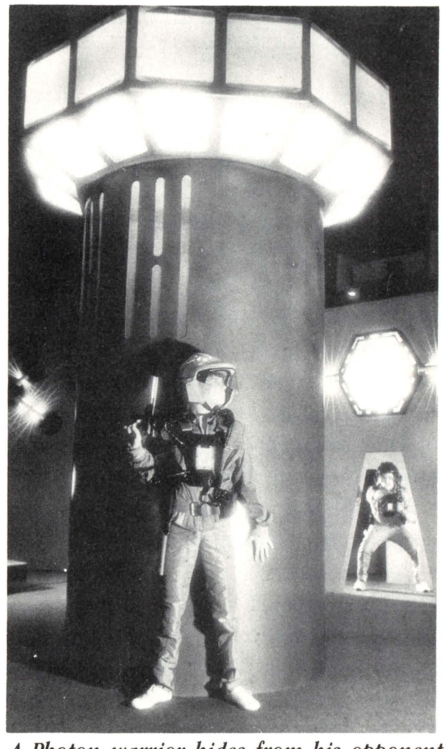
And so the world of coin-op seems to be getting pulled apart from two different directions. One is the current consumer products that allow players to physically play out games with the additional incentive of technically advanced weaponry. The other is the encroachment of what some might dismiss as a fad comparable to the disco boom of years past. You remember those old dance halls and empty warehouses that were transformed into the chic nightclubs that brought new meaning to touch dancing? Well, many still exist and maybe the lesson learned is that almost any solid concept can survive the test of time. And so it goes with the two leading proponents of the laser game phenomenon.

George Carter III conceived of the Photon concept during the mid-1970's after observing the space battles portrayed in the motion picture "Star Wars." The electronic and computer technology available at the time, however, didn't make the Photon concept feasible. But Carter never lost sight of his dream. In 1982, he commenced a research and development effort which resulted in the development of the first Photon playing field. And in April of 1984, the Photon Amusement Center opened in Dallas, Texas.

Photon warriors dressed in full space age regalia, anxiously await the arrival of the opposing team. Equipment includes a sensory helmet, a Photon Phaser, a Photon Control Module worn around the chest, and a power pack for the waist that energizes all Photon space gear.

From that start, Photon franchises have extended into major markets in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan, with a total of 16 centers opened and more on the way. In addition, Carter was smart enough to license off his concept to the extent that we can now get bombarded by Photon footwear, clothing, toys, games, video and audio cassettes, books, novelty items and, of course, a television program that began broadcasting in September of 1986. But what is the inspiration for all this madness?

Well, a Photon Amusement Center is a computer enhanced participatory, battle game amusement facility which allows team players the opportunity to compete against each other in a game known, appropriately enough as Photon. The game is played in a fantasy environment consisting of a multi-level indoor playing area of usually 10,000 square feet.



A Photon warrior hides from his opponent behind the Alien Tower in the first Photon facility.

Each player is equipped with specialized head gear, a phaser, a computerized chest pod, and battery pack. Two teams, each comprised of ten or more players, battle each other with infrared light phasers within the playing area, which is the fantasy planet known as Photon. There's a maze of catwalks, towers, balconies, and tunnels ably

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And as the corporate business plan describes, "the players experience audio, visual, and physical activity during each action filled game." The object of all this frenzy is to accumulate as many points as possible by shooting an opposing player, scoring hits while avoiding getting hit yourself. In addition, there's the challenge of scoring against the opposing players' home base during each six and one-half minute game.

The Photon Amusement Center then displays each individual's score, as well as team scores on a large Strategic Maneuvers Report video screen. The cost to these intrepid individuals? $3.50 for a single game (and you thought fifty cents for a video game was too much!) Each Photon playing field holds up to 20 players per game providing the potential for staging eight of these games per hour. Without taking out a calculator, you can tell that we're talking about major bucks, especially with Photon Amusement Centers being open eight hours a day, Monday through thursday, nine hours on Fridays, 13 hours on Saturdays and (no rest for the weary) 12 hours on Sunday. In addition, Photon allows visitors to view the playing action from special observation decks for another $1 per game. Visitors can even participate in the game on the field, although this is done solely as a one-on-one affair so as not to detract from the actual proceedings.

In essence, Photon is covering all the bases for its environmental centers, obviously maximizing dollars along the way. But there's still more to the amusement center including a snack bar, separate lounge with tables and chairs (sounds like the local health or tennis club), amusement game machine area and, last but not least, a Photon merchandise shop.

But it's in marketing that Photon is taking some pages out of other leisure time entertainment forms with organized leagues, tournaments, and special group affairs that ensure regular gatherings of Photon warriors. However, Photon Amusement Centers are not alone in attracting interested players who want something more for their entertainment dollar. There's another new kid on the block just as hungry to tap into this growing phenomenon with a slight variation on the theme that, initially at least, appears to be fundamentally closer to the Westworld scenario than Photon, although it incorporates many of the same characteristics. Together, however, it looks like a Chuck E. Cheese/ShowBiz contest for market share and market penetration.

Lazer Maze is the brainchild of Roland Crump, a former Disney designer who created something that might be considered a living video game. Asked to describe just what Lazer Maze is, Chip Buerger, a man who sells franchises for Lazer Maze International, states that "Lazer Maze is not really a game. It is the next entertainment media." And after two and a half years and a $2 million investment, High Technology Recreation Industries of Canada developed and started aggressively selling franchises for this interactive experience.

Besides operators in Edmonton, Canada and Sherman Oaks, California, Lazer Mazes are currently being developed for San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Washington D.C. and Detroit, with, no doubt, many more to follow if the craze continues to attract those with the financial means to get behind it.

Interestingly, though there are many similarities between Photon and Lazer Maze, there are also differences. Players are armed with a lazer blaster gun as they enter the first of four dark chambers that make up the lazer maze. There are solid black walls and a dense fog that fills the air. The living maze offers tunnel-like pathways that lead to the chambers and the eventual encounters with alien creatures.

In random sequence, the robotic

creatures illuminate and lunge forward in an attack mode, firing their lazers at the human intruders (shades of Stern's *Berserk?*). The players must try to blast the robots while avoiding oncoming fire. Each Lazer Maze system includes seventeen different full size attack robots and twenty-eight floating robot heads which threaten human intruders.

Fortunately, players are warned of the direction of the attack by a loud swishing sound. And only a direct hit between the eyes will cause the enemy creature to seemingly explode, scoring points for the player. It's only 30 in each of the unique chambers, with four players being able to go through the Lazer Maze at one time for an hourly capacity of 100 players.

The sequences of attack are always random so the player is never confronted with the same challenges. But maybe more intriguing is the opportunity for players to select a skill level. A push of a button can make the assault easier or more difficult, plus there are three different sizes of lazer blaster guns. At each ascending level of play the pace of attack accelerates, which also offers a greater potential for higher scores in the process.

Lazer Maze packs a lot of punch in a limited amount of space: only 1,500 to 2,000 square feet are needed to set up a facility which is designed to be operated a total of 66 hours per week. For $5 each player gets a permanent membership and two free plays. A code name is chosen for each player that is logged into a computer. Each succeeding time through the Lazer Maze then costs $3. And, of course, one can only imagine the potential for organized leagues and tournament competitions.

But when I talked with Chip Buerger about the novelty of Photon or even Lazer Maze wearing off over time, his response was an interesting one that caused me to once again think about Westworld. In essence what he said was that if aliens from space were no longer in vogue, Lazer Maze could just as easily put on a "new coat of skin" to their robots and transform the interior in the wild west or knights of the roundtable or any other time frame, such as Gangsters form the Roaring Twenties; keeping the allure alive.

And so it is that we now see a living video game with all the trappings, attainable in a limited amount of space that might well compete in a mall with the local game room. There has even been some rumors of Photon franchises including a Lazer Maze with its own set up.

The progress of these concepts has been remarkable and their influence on coin-op is still to be determined. But there are those who are willing to gamble that the next generation of leisure time entertainment might be something close to the experimental qualities that one can find at Lazer Maze and Photon. The coin-op industry might well take notice of what is occurring in these allied fields and modify existing operations or, at least, be aware the competition is going to get even keener for those coins from today's players.

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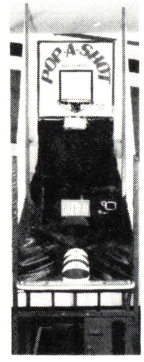

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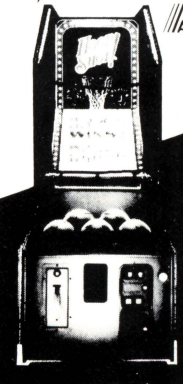

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Challenges: A new look

by Rusty Storbeck

When Alan Bruck was a distributor, he never liked the "dark, foreboding design" of most of the arcades he helped operators set up. In some of them, he says, "you couldn't see to the back of the store." In 1986, when the owner of Banner Specialty Company, founded in 1917 and one of the oldest independent distributors in the country, decided to sell, Bruck-- who was president of the firm at the time--opted to get into the operating end of the business. But he said to himself that he'd do things differently. And he did.

That year, Bruck started up Recreational Concepts, Inc. By the end of 1986, he had opened three Challenges gamerooms--one in Willow Grove Park, outside of Philadelphia; one in Market Square at North DeKalb, in Atlanta; and one in the North Hills Mall, in Fort Worth, Texas. All three are mall locations, and all three are--as Bruck promised--different.

Challenges in Decatur, GA

What's different? For one thing--and it's a big one--Bruck has given the arcade location a new face. The Challenges stores, he explains, are done in light, pastel colors, which he describes as presenting "an upscale look."

Attendants at the stores are attired in a "uniform" of black pants, white shirt, pink bow tie, and black vest.

Such changes, Bruck feels, are more than cosmetic. He explains that his goal is to make the gamerooms (he eschews the word *arcade*, because it has, he feels, the same seedy connotation that *poolroom* has) a place where *everyone* can come and be comfortable ("fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, guys and their dates" are examples of the clientele he hopes to attract).

Bruck also points out that although his clientele does include businessmen, mall employees, and women, many of his customers are teenagers. When they step onto pleasant premises, with neatly attired attendants, he says they tend to behave better.

Another thing Bruck feels strongly about is promotion. Operators, he says, are retailers, and promotion, in his opinion, is essential to any retail operation. In an industry that lends itself to promotion, he says, not enough of it is done. While he concedes that promotional efforts were not really necessary in the industry's heyday, he says that today things are different. The fervor of the video boom not what it used to be, and gamerooms not always in the best locations within a mall setting (near a food court or a movie theater or both), operators can't simply open the doors and expect customers to pour in. Promotion, however, takes up the slack, Bruck says.

What kinds of promotions does Bruck do? He's had pinball tournaments and given away pinball machines. He has what he calls "free-play days," a promotion in which he gives his customers two free plays a week and, at the end of a month or so, awards a $100 mall certificate in a drawing. Tickets to sporting events--major league baseball games, for example--find their way to the winners of some of his sports theme promotions.

Challenges in Willow Grove, PA

What his stores are also known for, however, are the month-long promotions in which he uses a board called an electronic programmable display to record the high scorers in games that have been designated "honor roll games." Players *challenge* those high scores (hence the name of the store), and at the end of the promotion, the winners are awarded a Challenges T-shirt that labels them as high-score champs.

Overall, Bruck wants to present a "high-quality operation" that will keep gamerooms an "integral part" of mall leasing and development. Too many developers look askance at gamerooms, he says, because of the kids. Kids, however, are here to stay, and gamerooms, Bruck says, give them an acceptable outlet for their energies. Sounds like he's got a real good point.

NEWS

Arizona coin-op community opposes new gambling law

The Arizona Coin Machine Council has been joined by Bally Southwest Distributing, Mountain Coin Machine Distributors, the Peter Piper Pizza chain, the Nickels & Dimes arcade chain, and local operators opposed to a new gambling law passed by the Arizona legislature April 19. The law is due to go into effect July 19.

"This law will definitely affect operators and distributors in Arizona," said Bob Snyder of Bob Snyder and Associates, the California consulting firm. "As worded, to qualify as amusement gambling there can be no outcome of any material degree, no prizes offered as a lure, and no benefit other than the immediate right to replay."

According to Sal De Bruno, general manager of Bally Southwest, "Our attorneys have been researching the situation. We're aiming for a temporary restraining order and trying to get a lobbyist to represent our industry. In addition to hurting skill crane and Skee-Ball operation, it also will affect bowling centers that offer prizes to its customers and any other businesses that give prizes."

The law was the topic of much discussion at the Bally Southwest open house on May 20. Dave Kanter of Pistol Pete's Pizza said, "We have no cranes in our Arizona locations but we have 10 to 15 Skee-Balls per location and the law will kill us on that. Skee-Balls are our biggest money-makers."

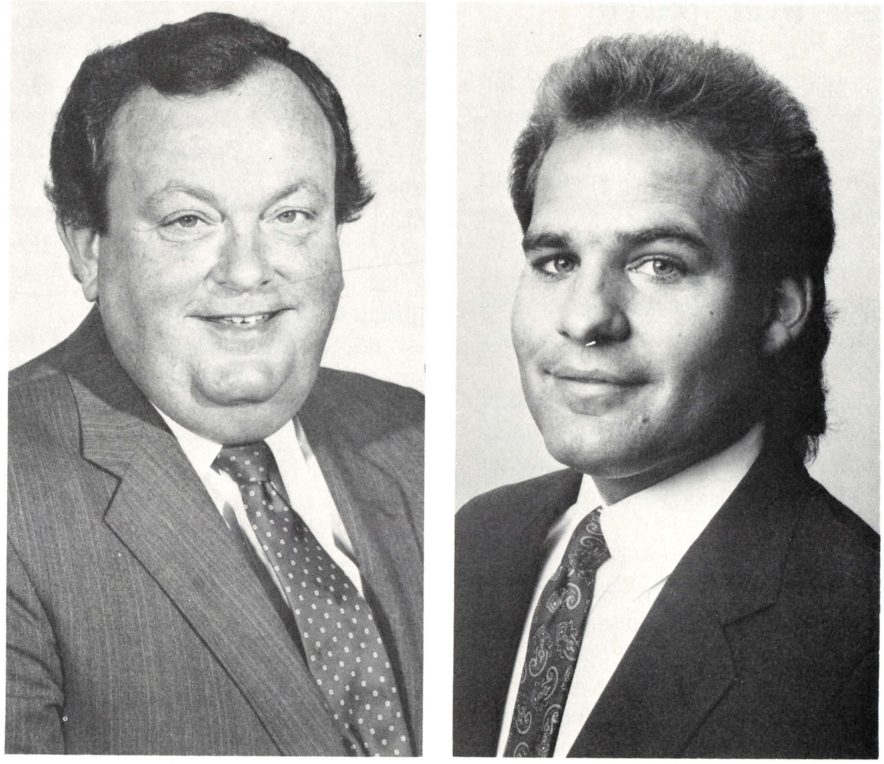
Bill Boswell of Edgewater Hotel and Casino, whose parent company is Circus Circus, is checking the legality of cranes and whether they fall into skill or chance categories. He said he wanted to place some cranes in locations in Laughlin, Nevada, but their attorneys have said they were illegal. However, their attorneys will be checking again.

Tony Brog of Hustle Games, that operates in Colorado, Arizona, and southern California, said he only has 11 cranes in Arizona and the reason he got them in the first place was to save locations: they wanted them. He said he will operate his cranes until the end, then move them to another state.

The state association has not been very active in the past two years, but the passage of this legislation has led to more operators joining the association and working together.

The new law, Arizona's Senate Bill #1035, has redefined gambling for the state. It repeals Title 13, Chapter 33 by amending it and adding a new Chapter 33.

In part, the law states: "*Amusement gambling* means gambling using a device, game, or contest which is played for entertainment if all of the following apply--(a) a player or players actively participates in the game or contest or with the device, (b) the outcome is not in the control, to any material degree, of any person other than the player or players, (c) the prizes are not offered as a lure to separate the player or players



Last month we announced two appointments significant to pinball production. Joe Dillon, left, is now vice president of pinball products for Bally Midway Manufacturing Company and Jeff Walker, right, is now vice president of sales/international, and director of marketing/domestic, for Data East USA, Inc. Best wishes to both men and the companies that now have the benefit of their talents.

from their money, and (d) either of the following--no benefit is given to the player or players other than the immediate and unrecorded right to replay which is not exchangeable for value, and the gambling is an athletic event and no person other than the player or players derive a profit or chance of a profit from the money paid to gamble by the player or players."

Gambling is defined as "an act of risking or giving something of value for the opportunity to obtain a benefit from a game or contest of chance or skill, or a future contingent event, but does not include bona fide business transactions which are valid under the law of contracts..." The bill continues to prescribe classifications of offenses and criminal charges, and mentions exclusions from the law. Arizona does have a state lottery.

Glendale and Movie Hut clash over parrot

On May 8, in U.S. District Court for the eastern district of Virginia, Alexandria division, an order of preliminary injunction was granted to Glendale Distributors, Inc. of Providence, R.I. against Movie Hut, Inc. of Elkland, Mo. and its president, Jack Clair, in respect to its *Pirate Parrot*, an egg vending machine that utilizes a talking parrot.

Glendale manufactures the *Talking Parrot* egg vending machine and holds U.S. Copyright No. VA 239-909 covering its plush mechanical parrot as a sculptural work.

Movie Hut has been "enjoined from making, selling, or otherwise distributing, leasing, demonstrating, offering to sell or otherwise distribute, or operate egg vending machines that utilize the parrot of said defendants' present *Pirate Parrot* egg vending machines or that utilize any parrot substantially similar to the parrot of Glendale's *Talking Parrot* egg vending machines."

The order remains in effect until a final judgment is entered in the case. Movie Hut has been ordered to notify its distributors and locations of the action or provide such a list to Glendale.

Peter Robinson, president of Glendale, stated, "Wewill not tolerate copies of our product. We have successfully won legal cases against copiers throughout Europe and intend to do the same here in the U.S. While at this moment our legal action is in the copyright field, we have a patent which has been granted in the U.K. and Europe and is lodged with the U.S. patent office."

Glendale announced that it had filed a copyright infringement case in the Federal Court in Philadelphia against two vending machine distributors who had been dealing in infringing *Pirate Parrot* machines. Robinson anticipates receiving a preliminary injunction in the immediate future.

Movie Hut officials claim that the court order applies only to the plush parrot suits used by both companies to cover the mechanism in the egg vending machines that causes animation of the parrot, and that it does not apply to any other parts of the machines. The company advises that it has displayed to the court a new plush parrot suit it intends to use in all machines sold and delivered after the date of the court order, and which it intends to use to replace every plush parrot suit now located in any of its *Pirate Parrot* **animated** egg vending machines.

Officials stated that the order of the court in no way applies to the *Pirate Parrot* **revolving** egg vending machines it markets.

Movie Hut officials stated that they felt Movie Hut would ultimately prevail on the merits in the law suit. However, out of caution, and to avoid inconvenience to its customers, Movie Hut has elected to recall and replace all existing plush *Pirate Parrot* suits in animated egg vending machines sold up to the date of the court's order, and to change permanently to the suit approved by the court on all plush *Pirate Parrots* in animated egg vending machines sold or shipped after the date of the court's order. Movie Hut wishes to apologize to all its customers for any inconvenience caused by this or any related law suits.

Customs agents seize Fugi shipment

U.S. Customs agents in Oklahoma City, Okla. seized a May 5 shipment en route from Fugi Electronics in Ontario, Canada, to an operator in Enid, Okla.

According to Bob Fay, director of industry affairs and enforcement for AAMA, the shipment contained illegitimate Taito *Renegade* and Capcom *Legendary Wings* games, and illegal graphics for those two games as well as illegal graphics for Konami's *Top Gunner*.

Fay stated that this was a small shipment, but he was pleased that U.S. Customs agents are beginning to check even small shipments entering the U.S. from unauthorized Canadian distributors. He added that in the month of April the U.S. Customs Service entered the identities of the illegitimate Canadian distributors into a nationwide Customs alert list.

This current seizure is the first dividend of what Fay hopes to be many dividends of a new customs program to detect and intercept illegitimate products entering the U.S. market. Results of the seizure will be forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Oklahoma City as well as to U.S. Customs agents in the Dallas regional office for appropriate action.

N.C. payphone association files testimony

The North Carolina Payphone Association held its first annual meeting on May 2 in Greensboro to elect a board of directors and officers. Officers elected are: president, Vince Townsend of Pay Tel Communications; vice president, Mack Vester of Convenient Communications; treasurer, Mike Smart of Coin Telephones; and secretary, Tom Hiatt of Public Telephone Service.

Testimony to be presented to the utility commission by the association will address the impact of the existing tariff, directory assistance charges, and statewide availability of operator screening.

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"We feel confident about our chances to win some improvements in the regulation of our industry," said Townsend. "We are going into the hearing as a unified group. Our association members range from the major payphone dealers to the small business owners having one pay telephone. Our members represent several major manufacturers including Elcotel, American Payphone, Payphone of America (SESA-ITT), and Ernest Telecom."

Townsend further noted that "through our association members we have been able to account for a majority of all payphones installed since deregulation. Our members worked very hard to collect the actual data history on all payphones installed in North Carolina. This information is instrumental in our argument that the current tariff has created a revenue gain for the local telephone companies. We have, to our benefit, the original first hearing testimony prepared by Jim Cantrell of Public Payphone which included Southern Bell's data request that estimated the impact of the tariff. The original Southern Bell estimates and our actual data show that the current tariff is creating a cash surplus for the Bell companies."

The North Carolina Utilities Commission hearing for the COCOT industry is scheduled for July 14. For more information contact Vince Townsend, P.O. Box 3464, Greensboro, NC 27402; or call (919)656-7754.

AMOA sets tentative Expo seminar schedule

The Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) has set a tentative educational seminar schedule for its Expo '87 to be held November 5-7 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

According to Randy Chilton of Chilton Vending in Wichita, Kan., chairman of the seminar subcommittee, recognized industry, government, and management experts are scheduled to address the following topics: cranes from a merchandising perspective, cranes from a technical perspective, cigarette vending, management excellence, leagues (with emphasis on darts), computers, and how the new tax law affects the industry.

In addition to educational seminars, 194 booths have been purchased by 48 companies and a total of 486 booths are available for the show.

Program, housing, and registration information is being sent to thousands of operators, distributors and manufacturers nationwide. Anyone interested in exhibiting should contact Ann Harris at AMOA headquarters, 111 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601, or call (312) 644-6610.

Aladdin's Castle backs SADD

To aid in the war against substance abuse, Bally's Aladdin's Castle has pledged a three-year commitment to SADD (Students Against Driving Drunk), an organization founded in 1981 by Robert Anastas and dedicated to eliminating the drunk driver and saving lives.

"Aladdin's Castle, and the coin-operated amusement industry as a whole, are banding together to aid in this cause," explained Barbara Seifert, national marketing manager for Aladdin's Castle. "Many people don't realize that drinking and driving is the number one killer of America's youth. We all need to do what we can to help stop it."

The fun center chain's commitment to the cause begins by displaying "Don't Drink and Drive" posters in each of its locations, distributing informational fliers on MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) and SADD, and acting as distribution centers for SADD's "Project Graduation" manuals that teach students how to enjoy safe, non-alcoholic prom and graduation parties.

Aladdin's Castle kicked off a Score for SADD fund-raiser May 4-10, donating half the proceeds from *Pole Position* or *Pole Position II* driving games to the national SADD organization to support existing chapters and help establish new ones.

"This is a fund-raising event where everyone in the community can get involved," said Seifert. "By playing just one game, customers can do their part to eliminate teenage drinking and driving."

Aladdin's Castle also hosted a Video-A-Thon May 9-10 for SADD members to raise funds for their own local chapter, based on the number of points they score on designated games at any Aladdin's Castle location.

Over 300 Bally's Aladdin's Castle fun centers are participating in the program. The chain supports many charitable organizations benefiting America's youth, such as the March of Dimes, Easter Seals, the Hide and Seek Foundation, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "Be Smart! Don't Start! Just Say No!" campaign.

SADD began with one high school chapter six years ago and has grown to over 10,000 high school, 2,000 junior high, and 300 college chapters. Since its inception, there has been a significant drop in the number of deaths due to drinking among young people.

Rowe adds new video jukebox features

Rowe International, manufacturer of the Rowe *Video Jukebox*, has introduced a feature that enables locations to deliver promotional or sales messages to patrons along with music and videos.

A programmable message center feature is now part of the Rowe system and allows three messages in bold letters on a 25-inch video monitor between selections and during record selections. If additional monitors are connected to the

Rowe's video jukebox message center

system, the message appears on each one.

According to Joel Friedman, vice president of Rowe, "The message feature was developed to let location owners take advantage of the high impact achieved by our *Video Jukebox*. People are accustomed to paying attention to words flashed on a monitor. It's a medium that delivers."

He added that the easily operated message center gives locations a chance to tell customers about special events, promotions, and even special prices on products and services.

Ride Dynamics appoints Hughes and King

Ride Dynamics of Ann Arbor, Michigan, the North American distributor of Bolwell Flight Simulators, announces changes in its senior executive positions.

Linley Hughes, a director of Bolwell Australia, has been appointed acting president. Hughes will directly oversee Ride Dynamics' consolidation in the marketplace and direct the extension of its warehousing and customer support facilities. His availability to the distributor is designed to ensure a strengthened relationship between the operator and the manufacturer.

Courtney King has been appointed marketing manager. He brings a wealth of experience in the launch of new products and has previously specialized in the U.S. national distribution of manufactured goods. King will build on the solid results of the initial six months and create the distribution network required to best suit the flight simulators and other, upcoming Bolwell products.

Confidence based on results to date has led to this repositioning for growth. With operators reporting average number of rides per week in excess of 1,000--at 50 cents per ride--and a best yet of 1,740 rides in one week, Ride Dynamics has proven that the design parameters of the flight simulators were right on target.

Operators report that simulators on location beside conventional kiddie rides in no way diminish the gross in those units, the simulators actually stimulate interest in other rides.

Ride Dynamics feels that the simulators can be used to create new sites. As in Australia some malls in the U.S. which have a policy of no kiddie rides are prepared to negotiate sites for flight simulators.

Ride Dynamics now has financing available with approval in most cases within 24-48 hours and also is in a position to help operators upgrade old rides with an exchange program. Call (313) 769-0172 for more information.

Country music talent contests

Holiday Inn Hotels and *Music City News* are sponsoring Mr. and Ms. Country Music America talent contests to find tomorrow's country music stars. Participating Holiday Inns will host local contests weekly during June and July to find Mr. Country Music and during September and October for Ms. Country Music.

Local weekly winners will receive $100 cash, with the local grand prize winner receiving $200 plus the opportunity to compete in the state finals. State winners will compete in national finals in November on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville. Tammy Wynette and John Schneider will host.

Interested local talent can pick up entry forms at participating Holiday Inn hotels or call 1-800-622-2668.

Nationwide Vending names Van Zandt

F. J. Pollak, executive vice president of Nationwide Vending Services, Inc., has named Byron D. Van Zandt director of operations of its vending management organization.

Van Zandt will be responsible for overseeing the daily operations of more than 1,000 local vending/affiliates throughout the country, who install and operate for Nationwide under its national account program.

Van Zandt previously was vice president/general manager of G.A.F.F./-Central Vendors of Des Moines, Iowa one of Nationwide vending's affiliates.

"We appreciate the fact that as one of our local operator/affiliates, Byron's interest in our organization led him to this new position," said Pollak. "Our steady growth over the past several years has been such that we will require the experience that Byron brings to our company"

Nintendo names new distributor

Nintendo has announced the appointment of Operator's Distributing as a new authorized distributorship bringing the total of Nintendo's distributors to 43 companies.

Operator's Distributing in Highpoint, N.C., will serve the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. The staff includes Steve Henderson, owner/general manager; Dick McCannell, sales manager; Dick Hall, service manager; Jeff Douglas, parts manager;

Randall Blair, shipping and receiving manager; and Cheryl Phillips, administration.

"We are honored to be representing Nintendo," said Henderson. "Our staff is especially excited about the versatility and potential of the *PlayChoice-10 System.*"

Frank Ballouz, vice president of marketing for Nintendo added, "We are pleased to have Operator's Distributing join our team of distributors. Their enthusiasm is a great asset to our industry."

They may be reached at (919) 884-5714.

Connor develops *Videosmarts*

Connor Toy Corporation of Wausau, Wis., known for its traditional wooden toys, has created *Videosmarts*, a new educational home video toy.

Videosmarts turns passive TV-watching tots into participants who actually interact with the television through their very own tyke-sized computer. The four-button computer and videotape system utilizes a home VHS videocassette recorder and color television set. Through a cast of colorful characters such as Teachin' Teddy (part puppet and part robot), children aged three and up learn about nutrition, health, safety, the five senses, developing a positive self-image, and the 3R's in an entertaining new way.

The video asks questions for the child to answer on the computer. Using lights, sound effects and a friendly voice to signal correct or incorrect answers, the computer provides positive reinforcement that makes the child eager to learn more.

Connor is headed by David Vergeyle, president, and Craig Ellison, vice president for new product development who has 10 years previous experience in the toy development with Kenner Products.

For further information on *Videosmarts* write Connor Toy Corporation, 200 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10010

NLBA show set for November

Tavern and restaurant owners from all over America are expected this November 8-11 at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas for the 37th Annual Convention and Trade Show sponsored by the National Licensed Beverage Association (NLBA–.

Each year the NLBA event brings large numbers of independent business owners together to meet with their major suppliers in an entertaining and business-oriented atmosphere.

The NLBA trade show always draws an exciting mixture of exhibits from large and small companies with products or services of interest to tavern owners. These include beer and liquor companies, snack food & beverage makers, electronic amusement device makers, sound and light specialists, refrigeration and dispensing equipment makers, bar supply vendors, etc.

For more information, contact the NLBA trade show manager, Sally Paul, at (703) 683-6633; or write NLBA, 309 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Ernest Telecom opens warranty center

Ernest Telecom, Inc., manufacturer of private pay telephones, has added warranty and board level repair capabilities to its Anaheim, Calif. Service Center. All product sales and service, including warranty work, will be handled by the Anaheim Service Center for Ernest Telecom distributors west of the Mississippi River.

The Anaheim Service Center opened in April to meet the demand for Ernest Telecom products on the West Coast. The company has shipped more than 16,000 units to date and recently expanded production to 16 hours per day.

The center is a full support facility offering product sales, spare parts, warranty repair-board level, programming, hardware and software training, and emergency field service. Technician classes are available weekly.

For more information call (714) 758-1200 or write to John Cunningham, Ernest Telecom Service Center, 232 West Cerritos Avenue, Anaheim, CA 92805.

PAMMA convention coming in August

The Pennsylvania Amusement and Music Machine Association (PAMMA) will hold its annual convention at Seven Springs Mountain Resort August 7-9 in Champion, Penn., one hour's drive from Pittsburgh.

The program will include a board of directors meeting and dinner, exhibit floor for viewing new equipment, membership meeting and seminars.

To arrange exhibit space or make reservations to attend, call 800/521-7778 or (717) 232-5322. For more information, write PAMMA headquarters, 12 North Third Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101.

In other Pennsylvania news, PAMMA held its Valley National 8-Ball state championship April 26 at South Hills Cue and Cushion.

Winners in the men's A division were: first--Fabrizio's, captain Bill Shaffer of Erie; second--Fabrizio's, captain Jack Robinson of Erie: and third--Zurn's Slow Rollers, captain Gerry Hansen of Erie.

Winners in the men's B division were: first--Bigham's, captain Jim Ackerman of Pittsburgh; second--Bigham's captain Steve Sehle of Pittsburgh; and third--Jand L Tavern, captain Jeff Moffett of Erie.

ITC aids dart tournament

The AMOA National Dart Association used Integral Technologies Corp.'s *League Secretary* software to classify players at its May 3 national dart tournament.

Association executive, Joe Conway said in a letter to the Bloomington, Minn. company: "Our interest in classifying our players according to abilities led us to

ITC. I came away with complete confidence. A review of ITC's capabilities shows a high degree of efficiency that every sport's league could benefit from. In a large part, the high degree of success of our national tournament is attributed to ITC."

Operators interested in more information on ITC's software for pool, darts, scheduling, or route accounting may contact Len Sandok at 1-800-328-2866 or in Minn. call 1-800-352-2780.

Stone returns to Nintendo

Nintendo of America has announced the return of Al Stone as vice president, international-commercial products division. Stone was one of Nintendo's original employees and shared in the responsibility for the success of *Donkey Kong.*

Stone will be responsible for international coin-op marketing sales. Prior to re-joining Nintendo he was president of Altcor International, Inc., Nintendo's exclusive European distributor for its coin-op products. Altcor's distributor network will now become Nintendo's European distributors.

These include distributors in Scandinavia, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

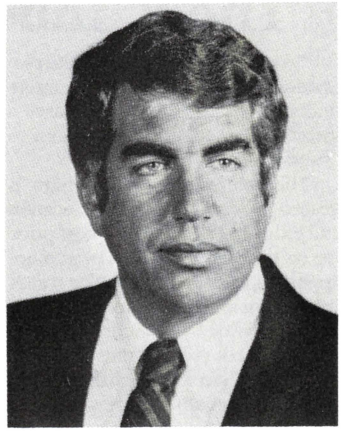
Al Stone

"I'm very happy to be returning to the Nintendo family," said Stone. He will be joining the company's in-house coin-op staff that includes Frank Ballouz, Linda Weber, Drew Maniscalco, and Cindy Buckell.

"Nintendo has two very experienced vice presidents in Frank and Al," noted Minoru Arakawa, president of Nintendo. "I'm confident they will make a great team."

Bally appoints Graf

Bally Midway-Sente has appointed N. David Graf to the new position of manager of systems development and facilities planning. Graf has been with Bally for 12 years and most recently served as purchasing and materials manager.



N. David Graf

Graf's assignment was based on his product and systems knowledge which will support him as he works to develop and implement Mapics, a material requirements planning and manufacturing system.

He will head a task force to implement this materials purchasing/tracking system when it is in place, and work closely with manufacturing management to incorporate it with existing systems.

Hanson-ITC adds Night-Shift to system

Hanson-ITC, the Minnesota developer of the GAMES (General Amusement Management Evaluation System) route accounting software, announces Night--Shift, a newly released module that enables unattended processing so more lengthy procedures can be accomplished. No more operator intervention.

Night Shift offers the user true push button operation. It follows the users' directions and allows the user to "spool tasks" for later processing, one after the other. It can be run anytime; however, running it after going home or during lunch (unattended) has advantages, especially if the user has a dozen or more reports to run.

GAMES' features include archive routines, purge utilities, and housekeeping utilities. The system provides for the future and accommodates add-on hard disks to expand a route and hardware.

GAMES is now a modular route accounting package. After acquiring the Basic Module, users can add capabilities to meet their growing data processing needs. The Basic Module offers revenue breakdowns, cash controls, printed collection forms, commission calculations, and location and machine histories. Other modules available are: Profitability, 1099's, Check Writing, Revenue Ranking, Trend Analysis,and the new Night- Shift.

For more information, call Hanson ITC at 1-800/328-2866. In Minnesota call 1-800/352-2780.

Playfair produces custom shuffleboards

Brian Crowl, president of Playfair Shuffleboard Company, Inc., of Fort Wayne, Ind., has announced that the company is now taking orders for a special production of 34-foot long shuffleboards.

The extra length shuffleboards feature four ramps instead of two. The units are essentially the same as the company's 16-and 22-foot boards. All Playfair shuffleboards have a three-inch thick maple hardwood laminated playing surface. Cabinets are constructed of birch, poplar, and pine.

Taverns and fraternal lodges are locations that most often request super size shuffleboards.

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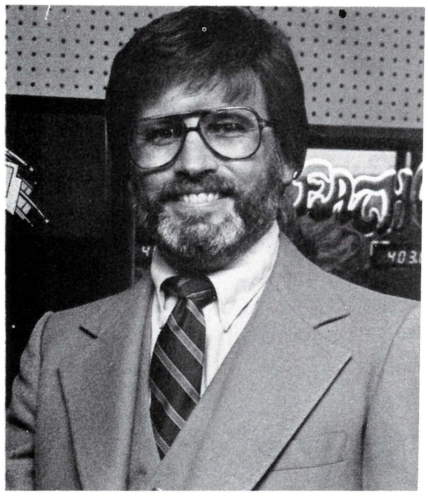
McCannell joins Operators Distributing

Dick McCannell, an industry veteran of 17 years, has joined Operators Distributing in High Point, N.C. as sales manager.

McCannell returns to the world of coin-op following two years away from the business. His career includes positions as co-owner and operator of J&J Amusement Distributors in Charlotte, vice president of operations for Eastern Distributing in Clemmons, and sales experience with Brady Distributing in Charlotte.

"I'm proud to be affiliated with Operators Distributing," said McCannell, "and have a chance to work with Steve Henderson. This is one of the fastest growing distributorships in the southeast. Our goal is to offer the operator the best value for his dollars spent, in sales and fast, quality service."

Operators Distributing currently represents: American Shuffleboard, Arachnid, Betson, Capcom, Drews, Dynamo, Grayhound, Game Masters, Merit, Memetron, Nichibutsu, Nintendo, NSM,



Dick McCannell

Romstar, SNK, Status, Taito, and Tecmo.

To reach McCannell, call (919) 884-5714, or write to Operators Distributing, Rt. 5, P.O.Box 336, High Point, N.C. 27263.

Nightclub & Bar Expo goes international

Opportunities Expositions, Inc., producers of the two Nightclub & Bar Expos and national conferences, has announced that the November Atlantic City Expo will become an international exposition.

The exposition, originally scheduled for November 3-5 will be held November 4-6 at the Atlantic City Convention Center. It will be an American international exposition and world conference. The second exposition, set for March 28-30, 1988, will be held in Las Vegas as a west coast exposition.

Strong encouragement and commitments have come from major groups in Europe and the U.S. to develop a single international exposition to serve as an American counterpart to the Rimini Trade Fair held each spring in Italy. The Rimini is the world's largest exhibition of lighting and sound products for theatres, clubs, and entertainment centers.

WAMO hosts third state dart tourney

The Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators, Inc., (WAMO) hosted its third annual state dart tournament April 24-26 at the Red Carpet Celebrity Lanes in Milwaukee.

Approximately 1,000 players competed for the $20,000 in prize money and awards. The event was co-sponsored by Merit Nomac, Inc. which provided 72 of the machines used for the tournament. Only players in WAMO-sanctioned leagues were eligible to participate.

American team wins Valley Cup

American dart teams from Illinois and Minnesota won top honors in competition with German competitors in the first Valley Cup Challenge Dart Tournament held in late February in St. Petersburg Beach., Fla.

The event was sponsored by The Valley Company of Bay City, Mich. in cooperation with teams sponsored by AMOA National Dart Association members. Valley restricted participation in the tournament to sanctioned league players in the AMOA organization.

Rick Brinkman, representing Twin City Novelty Co. of Minneapolis, won men's singles. Colleen Washburn, representing K.A.T., Inc., of Peoria, Ill. won ladies' singles. Carol Johnson and Terry Mutton, also representing K.A.T., Inc., won mixed doubles. These winners prevailed over the NSM Loewen West Germany international team for the Valley Cup. These same U.S. teams will compete in a second match of the competition in West Germany this October.

Among those cheering on the U.S. teams were: Alan Schafer, vice president of Valley; Ed Schultz of Ed's Distributing in Lansing, Mich. and president of the AMOA National Dart Association; Joe Conway, newly appointed executive director of the AMOA Association; Sherri Norberg and Bob Lund of C&N Sales in Mankato, Minn.; Mike Hawkins of D&R Star in Rochester, Minn; Tom Anderson of Just Darts in Indianapolis, Ind.; Clyde Knupp of Amuse-O-Matic Co. in Fort Dodge, Iowa; and Mike Tate of Twin City Novelty in Bloomington, Minn.

Next year's event will host teams expected from Canada, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Bahamas, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and West Germany.

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Operators go to Washington

The second annual Washington Conference was a success, agreed the nearly 130 attendees that represented 31 states and 70 companies. The purpose of the trip is to meet with senators and congressmen to present a true picture of the coin-op entertainment industry. "When there is a problem, it's too late to make friends. We must be here now," said Utah operator and member of the AMOA board, Craig Johnson.

"They are curious about what we are doing," noted AMOA president Dick Hawkins. "We have this great opportunity to show them a little about our industry."

Senators, congressmen, their aides and families joined operators, distributors and manufacturers at the capitol building for a joint sponsored AMOA/AAMA reception. The room was filled with an array of coin-op games from jukeboxes to the latest Capcom game, *Street Fighter* to Sega's *Out Run* to a Betson crane. Kids raced from game to game thrilled to play the latest in coin-op amusement while an older group waited to play Trivia. Government officials joined their offspring in many of the games or chatted with industry representatives.

Dennis Hertel, a congressman from Michigan told Play Meter that the idea of a reception with games on display was an excellent one to introduce the industry to representatives. "Inviting us and our families is an excellent idea. I think there will be an even bigger turnout next year," he said as his four youngsters awaited their turns on *Out Run.*

One subject that is top priority with operators is the possibility of the U.S. joining the Berne Convention. This means, in rather simple terms, that jukebox operators would probably be paying considerably higher fees than the already too-high $63 per jukebox, per year. Operators who met with their representatives unanimously mentioned this as an important subject. Craig Johnson said he didn't have a pre-set agenda but had a long talk with his representative about the industry in general.

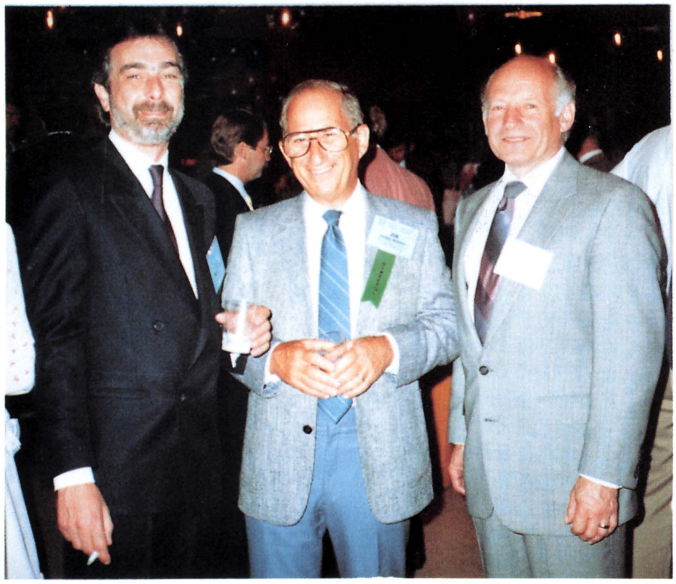
Todd Erickson, Summitt Amusement in Minnesota said, "I think more operators would come if they knew what it was all about." That may be true because many felt that each year would be bigger than the year before. This second annual event was by far better than last year and many are already looking forward to next year. I would like to extend a special thanks to all those who took the time to show up and represent the coin-op industry. The states that were represented were Arkansas, California, Colorado, D.C., Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Frank Seninsky, Play Meter's Frank the Crank, is planning a pinball tournament for the congressmen and senators attending the reception next year. "I think it will be fun having a democrat vs. republican contest," he noted. He also said that several manufacturers have offered to provide the machines and Betson has stated it will provide plush donkeys and elephants for the participants. Frank is also optimistic about next year's event. "This year too many of the invitations didn't get to the right people so next year we are planning to hand-deliver them," he said.

In the next issue Frank will do an article on the conference from an operator's point of view hoping to entice more participation.

Texas operators and manufacturers talk with Jim Wright, speaker of the house from Texas. From left, Betty Ringo, Ross and Vancie Todaro, Jim Wright, Byron Cook, Dock Ringo, Dick Hawkins, Mike Taylor, Wally Bohrer, and John Estridge.

From left, Joe Gilbert of Nintendo, Tom Riquier of T & M Amusements, and Todd Erickson of Summitt Amusements.



Konami's Steve Kaufman, left, talks with Joe Robbins of Sun Corp. and Jerry Gordon of Rowe.

From left, Nintendo's Joe Gilbert, Utah operator Craig Johnson and his wife Jana, and Rowe's Jerry Gordon.

Michigan congressman Dennis Hertel, center, chats with John Blouin of James Industries, left, and Atari's Mike Taylor.

From left, Data East's John Barone, Kane Amusement's George Kane, NSM's Rus Strahan, and Aldo Donnaloia of Capcom.

NEWSFEATURE

Put up your dukes!

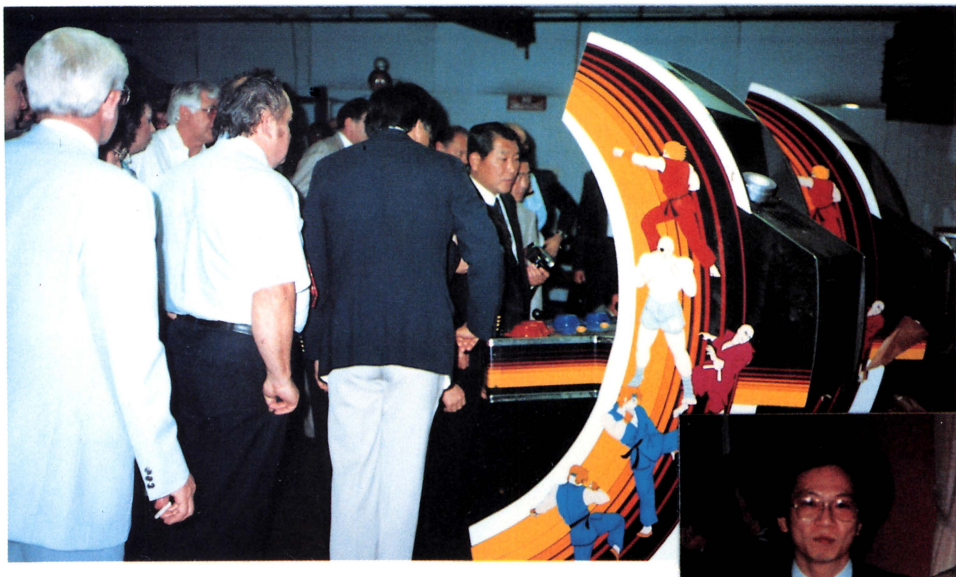
Capcom introduces Street Fighter

About 30 distributors showed up in Philadelphia for the unveiling of Capcom's newest game. A bus tour of the city, with tour guide Bill Cravens, divulged clues as to the theme of the new game. "Philadelphia is the only city in which to preview this game," Cravens told a curious audience while noting that boxing is one way that many have gotten out of the ghettos of the city. A stop in front of the art museum offered another clue--Rocky Balboa made his famous run up the stairs in the movie, "Rocky." The final clue and stop was the Cambria Boxing Club where a portion of "Rocky" was filmed. Enough clues? Have you guessed? Yep, the game has a fighting theme and is called appropriately enough, *Street Fighter*. After watching some boxing and kick boxing demonstrations at the gym, distributors got the chance to play the game.

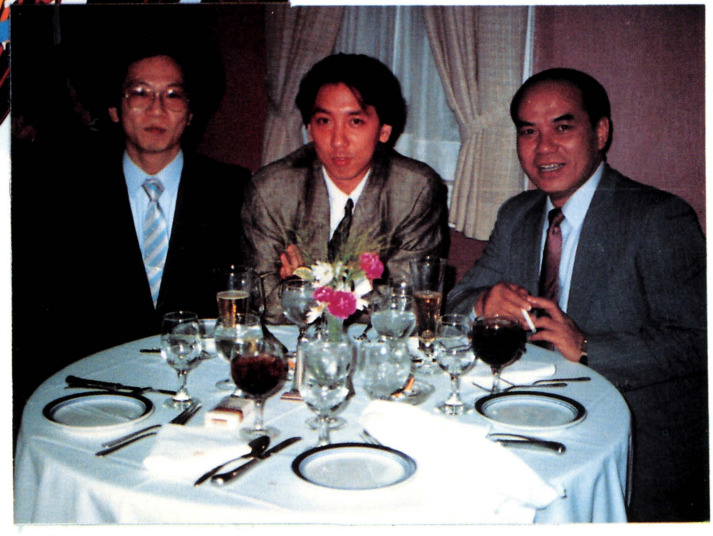
Cravens called the game a "quantum leap" in video with expanded memory and graphics better than laser. The game, offered in dedicated, is an impressive sight, with two pads for each of the two players to pound out commands. Cravens told the group that Capcom would be phasing out of the kit business, focusing on dedicated only. Dynamo will be building the games for Capcom and Atari designed the cabinet.

Capcom president, Kenzo Tsujimoto told distributors that Capcom intends to give 100 percent to coin-op games. He explained that Japan is going through with home games what the U.S. went through when Atari was so strong over here. He emphasized that coin-op must stay a step ahead and come out with something better than can be bought for the home. To accomplish that Capcom has recently added 60 new engineers to bring the total to 180 in design and research and development.

Cravens went on to say that Capcom was shipping *Bionic Commando* and would soon come out with *1943* (*1942* was licensed to Romstar.) He also stressed that it was time to return to the "traditional style" with distributors and it could only be done with dedicated games. A show of hands showed that distributors agreed that they would rather see good dedicated games. Cravens observed that when collections start rising, too many doctors, lawyers, etc. want to get into the business. "Having a strong distributor network helps us keep control of our industry," he said.



Mr. Tsujimoto demonstrates the new game *Street Fighter*.



"Without these guys, there would be no games," Aldo said of the engineering group he refers to as the "brains behind the game." From left, Takashi Kubozono who is in charge of the hardware and PC boards; Takashi Nishiyama, chief engineer guiding a group of 60 in design and planning; and Keisuke Takezawa, mechanical engineer responsible for the control panel assembly.

Mr. Tsujimoto told distributors that Capcom would give 100 percent to coin-op.

Operators watch a fight at the Cambria gym.

At the Cambria gym from left, Atlas' Jerry Marcus, New England Coin-Op's Rick Kirby, Kenzo Tsujimoto, George Nakayama, and Bill Cravens of Capcom.

From left, distributors Rick Kirby of New England Coin-Op, Steve Koenigsberg of State Sales, and Betson's Bob Boals.

Sharon Harris and Harvey Fisher of Stan Harris & Co. join Capcom's Aldo Donnaloia for a chat about the new game.

Video games dealt blow by high court of appeal in London

BY DAVID SNOOK

Up to 100,0000 video games in the United Kingdom are at risk after a shock decision by the High Court of Appeals in London.

Two out of three law lords decided that a coin-operated video game is a movie theatre for the purposes of the Cinemas Act. This now gives local councils immense power over the premises where video games are located.

It also gives immense power to some of the most vociferous of the coin machine industry's opponents in the United Kingdom.

It was the third hearing in the long, drawn out battle between Westminster City Council in London and the industry's trade association, the British Amusement Catering Trade Association (BACTA). The association was fighting this test case on behalf of one of its member operating companies, First Leisure Corporation.

After its shock defeat--although one of the law lords supported its views--BACTA immediately applied for and was granted permission to appeal to the highest court in the land, the House of Lords.

The dispute goes back several years. The Greater London Council, which has since been disbanded, was a fierce opponent of amusement arcades. It worked hard to obtain extra powers to regulate whether arcades could open in its area at all, and even then, it tried to find ways of determining the type of equipment they could contain, the opening and closing hours, and to have children banned.

Having failed in these ambitions, notably with a bill before the House of Commons, which was successfully fought by BACTA the GLC found what it thought might be a loophole. It suggested that a coin-operated video game was a film and therefore the wide powers which local councils had over movie theatres applied.

It tested it through the courts and lost the initial battle which was taken up by BACTA, but won the High Court appeal. The GLC was then disbanded, but the Westminster City Council, within whose territory the appeal site rested, took up the issue.

Under the Cinematograph Act of 1909, local councils have wide powers over movie theatres, especially over safety which is not surprising considering that highly flammable material is passing in front of hot lamps. Councils can, therefore, issue or refuse to issue a license to operate a theatre in its area, insist on a fire safety curtain in front of the screen, demand one or two employees on hand at all times trained to escort patrons to the emergency exit, and even protect public morals from pornographic films by viewing films before exhibition and awarding them certificates for screening in front of children, young adults, or adults only.

The real problems for video games came in 1982 with an amendment to the 1909 Act. The Cinemas Act brought into the act regulations to protect the public from possible pornographic video films. It was the boom in shops renting video films to the public which was at the back of Parliament's mind when it passed the Cinemas Act. But the use of the word "video" was to prove ill-fated for the coin machine industry.

At the helm of the opponents is Councilor Robert Davis, a member of Westminster City Council and a local politician clearly with aspirations for greater things.

All aspiring politicians need a "plank" and Councilor Davis some time ago decided that amusement arcades provided a good one, full of emotional issues which need not necessarily be proved to elicit plenty of media coverage.

He formed the Amusement Arcades Action Group, an assortment of individuals and local councils pledged to wage war on amusement arcades and, if possible, obtain sweeping powers to open and close arcades, pinpoint their hours of business, and the type of clientele they should have.

The group has for some years been vociferous in its campaign against arcades. It highlights the fact that children are permitted to enter arcades unaccompanied and that arcades contain gambling machines and video games, the latter of which could possibly include pornographic material.

All of these aspects have been eagerly voted on by the press and on the air, but BACTA has not watched it happen. The trade association, through its own elaborate public relations campaign conducted through a professional PR company, points out that while the law does not prevent children from entering arcades, the association's own code of conduct for town arcades (rather than seaside ones) prohibits

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children under the age of 16 from entering arcades, whether accompanied or not. And 80 percent of inland arcade owners are members of BACTA.

And the association has already dubbed the pornographic material issue a red herring, although it has actually been this side of the business which has proved to be the most damaging for the industry. Last December, Councilor Davis and his colleagues put out a scare to the press about a video "nasty" which was coin-operated and showed a pornographic film with a young lady stripping as the player succeeded with a poker game on the screen. This was, in fact, a relatively innocuous game built by American company Status Games called *Strip Poker*, but it got Councilor Davis and the anti-arcades faction widespread publicity in literally dozens of newspapers around the country.

BACTA pointed out that it had circulated a press release *six months* previously to the effect that it had asked Status Games not to import the game into the UK and the company had agreed. BACTA had foreseen trouble before it got started and nipped it in the bud--but BACTA's press release got nothing like the publicity that Councilor Davis's release received, but the latter made more sensational reading, a factor which has constantly worked in favor of the AAAG and against BACTA.

Nor has the fact that Britain's gambling machines in public places, the now famous "amusements with prizes" games with a cash payout of only $3 and tokens (replayable) of $6, been given the degree of prominence that it should. To the media, they are still gambling machines, no matter how innocuous their levels.

Against that background the legal battle over the Cinemas Act has been fought. And in the judgment delivered by the three lord justices on March 26, the overriding consideration was obviously the risk of obscene video films being admitted to the country.

This, then, had been the mode of attack followed by the Westminster City Council and forms the red herring which had so infuriated BACTA. In reality, no

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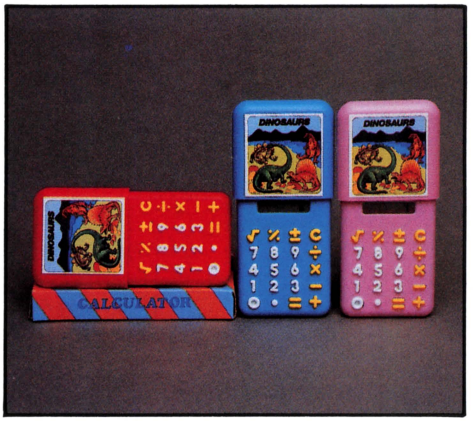

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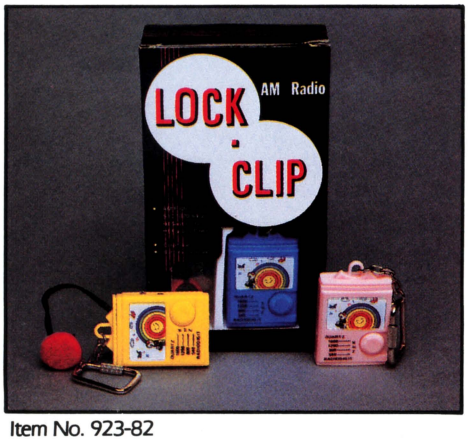

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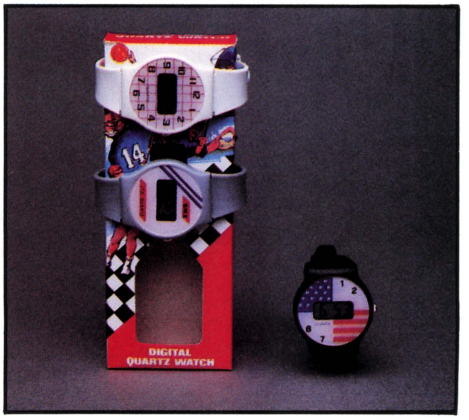

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one really considered the possibility--the *real* possibility--of public morals being threatened by coin-operated video games.

But for the purposes of the act, the judges concluded that the moving pictures presented by a video game was within the meaning of the act. They even confessed that it was not for them to take into consideration the fact that the effect of the act as it has been worded may inhibit coin-operated products in a manner which Parliament did not originally intend.

The red herring had worked. Westminster City Council and Councilor Davis had found a backdoor method of controlling amusement arcades. They can now demand that arcades should apply for a cinema license and then bluntly refuse them. Or permit them but dictate opening hours. And then rate every video game X to preclude children from the premises. Or demand elaborate escape exits in case of fire--so elaborate that it becomes impractical to install them. Or just generally make life and business so untenable that the arcade owners give up operating video games altogether and keep to amusements with prizes or other forms of coin-operated entertainment.

And if the councils want to be really bloody-minded, they could make life untenable for cafes, restaurants, hotels, pubs, public leisure centers, swimming pools, or any other place where the general public goes which uses video games as a means of entertainment and income.

Will they impose this immediately? is the next question anxiously being asked by the coin machine industry. In reality, Westminster City Council and any other like-minded local authority in the country, could impose these conditions immediately. In practice, they may decide to wait for the outcome of BACTA's appeal to the House of Lords, or threatened site-owners could let it get into court and ask for an adjournment pending the House of Lords decision, which has a reasonable chance of success.

And will all of the councils be in favor of the new powers? That's by no means certain. The Amusement Arcades Action Group has around 30 councils in active membership, yet the United Kingdom has over 600 local councils. Many of those may regard it as a nuisance to be suddenly asked to vet and issue certificates to dozens, even hundreds of locations whereas previously they licensed perhaps just one local movie theatre.

A shock decision it may be, but BACTA is by no means disposed to despair at its chances. Everything rests with the House of Lords, perhaps in a year's time, perhaps two. ▩

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A Day in the Life of a Used-Game Salesman: Eddie Boasberg

by Rusty Storbeck

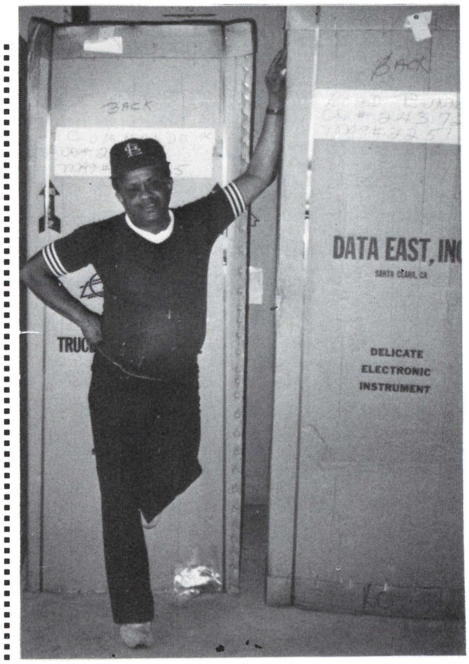
The face of the coin-op amusement industry has changed considerably in the past couple of years. But one company that probably chuckles a little when asked how it survived the boom is New Orleans Novelty, a company that Louis Boasberg started back in the days when commercial artist Harry Williams was designing a tilt mechanism for his first pinball game. How did New Orleans Novelty survive the boom? The same way it survived the more than five decades it's been in business. Play Meter tracked a workday at New Orleans Novelty with Eddie Boasberg, Louis's son. When you see how Eddie does things, you begin to see why the company has been around long enough to celebrate its silver anniversary (in 1982) and why it expects to be around for at least another fifty years.

7:15 AM: Eddie Boasberg has just gotten his cup of coffee from the McDonalds right around the corner. It's Thursday, and he's getting the same early start that he gets every morning except Friday, the day he drives his kids' carpool to school.

Walking up the steps to the shop, he passes beneath a marquee that says NEW ORLEANS NOVELTY and then beneath rows of lights in the ceiling of the flat-roofed entrance. The building used to house the Front Page, a Metairie nightclub, and the overhead bulbs used to flash on and off above the patio-like court that forms the entrance, ripples of blinding light racing from one end of each row to the other.

New Orleans Novelty moved here in '81, from the corner of Dryades and Calliope (in New Orleans, they say DRY-ads and KAL- ee-ope) in the downtown area. There were no mirrored walls in the foyer of the old place like there are in the new one. No high-backed, red-vinyl horseshoe booths crowding shiny-surfaced cocktail tables around the periphery of a circular showroom floor. And certainly no giant, hexagonal, stained-glass structure suspended from the ceiling, hovering over 20 or so games that are sandwiched between the booths and giving the whole affair the appearance and the feel of a gameroom on the starship Enterprise.

Every morning at this time, Boasberg cuts through this atmosphere of unreality--the showroom, which was once apparently a dance floor, has been silenced by carpeting--to his decidedly real workspace, which is located in a satellite area of the showroom that's a step or two above the main floor. His area also had nightclub tables and chairs



With a background of boxed games ready to ship is Ronnie Fields who has been with the company 10 years

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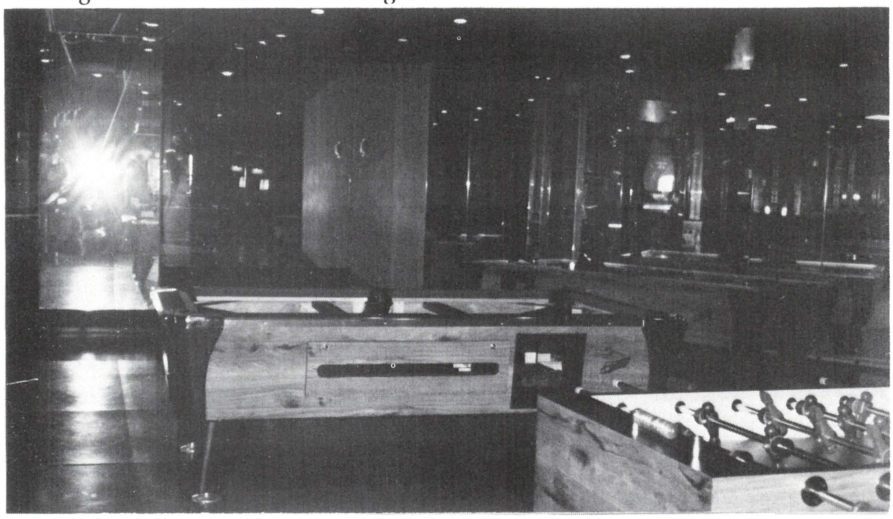
at one time, but now it's populated by office furniture--two desks, two chairs--and a case of Kentwood Spring Water (Boasberg never touches coffee after 10 A.M.).

The first thing Boasberg does is look at his phone messages, "to find out who's mad at me and who's not." The second thing he does is walk around the building to see what's come in off the route ("so I can fill my orders") and to see what games customers have brought in.

What games customers have brought *in*? Doesn't New Orleans Novelty sell games *to* its customers? Yes, Boasberg says, but 20 percent of the games it sells are games it has taken in on consignment. He also explains that New Orleans Novelty repairs games for local operators.



A pool table and table soccer on display in showroom.

8:00: Boasberg finishes those two tasks by eight o'clock. That's good, because "at eight o'clock," he says,"the phones start ringing."

And they do.

Palestine, Tex., is the first to call in today. Boasberg says he receives between 35 and 50 phone calls a day from people who want games. That's four to six calls an hour. He does 90 percent of his business, he says, over the phone. Kettle Falls, Wash., checks in next. And then Miller's Creek, N.C.; Cadillac, Mich., and a whole string of cities around the country. One call even comes across the wires from Honduras.

Just where are his customers from? Boasberg reels off a list that includes towns and cities in Georgia, Oklahoma, Arizona, Massachusetts, Maryland---

He stops himself short, and decides to approach the answer from another angle. "Let's put it this way: in the last five years, New Orleans Novelty has sold games to people in every state in the Union, including Alaska and Hawaii, and to customers in Honduras, Costa Rica, Belize, and Puerto Rico."

He comes up with another 90 percent figure: "90 percent of the people I do business with, I never meet."

9:30: The calls don't stop. "Hey, how are things in Boston?" Invariably, Boasberg has to restart the interview with "Where were we?"

Who are his customers? The majority of Boasberg's customers, he says, are small operators, although he deals with large operators as well as distributors.

Business good? Yes, he says.

How much did he sell last year? Boasberg fishes around for an answer.

Games line the walls in the warehouse.

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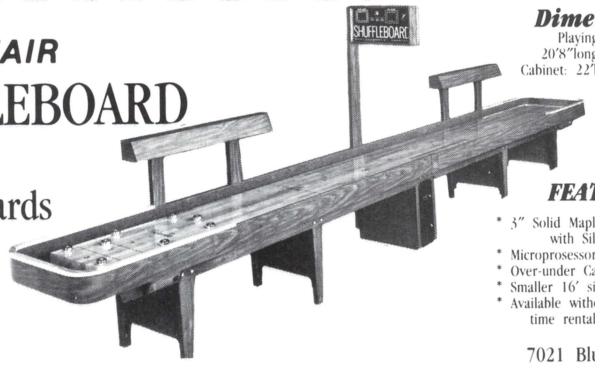

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Novelty, when there are plenty of used-game dealers around?

Boasberg explains that, first, his games are priced to move. Second, he says, they are of good quality. "Old games," he says with pride, "look like new" when they leave his shop. Ninety-nine percent of the machines that are shipped, he says, have all the factory updates.

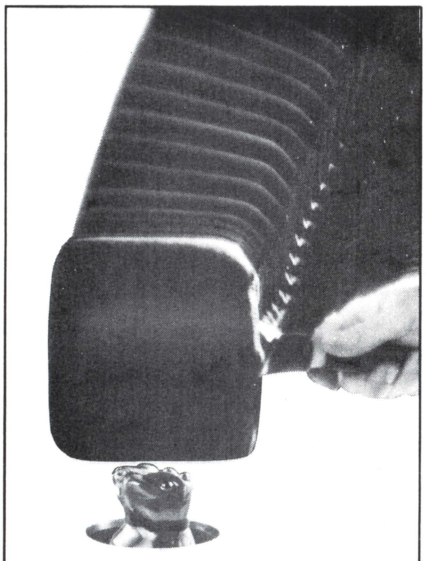
Boasberg also points out that New Orleans Novelty customizes the machines for its own route--modifying a steering wheel to handle better, for example--and

Not that he didn't have a good year, but, he explains, "when I play basketball--I coach--I never look at the score." He settles on a figure of around $800,000 for used games.

10:00: Once again, the phone rings. "What do you say, how's the weather in Miami? Good. How many do you need?"

When he's off the phone, I ask, Why would an operator from Miami or, say, Cadillac, Mich., buy from New Orleans

Games get a new look before leaving the shop.



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Eddie with the ladies who "run" the office: from left, Celie Delaney, Josephine Anderson, Rose Nuccio, and Jesse Martinez.

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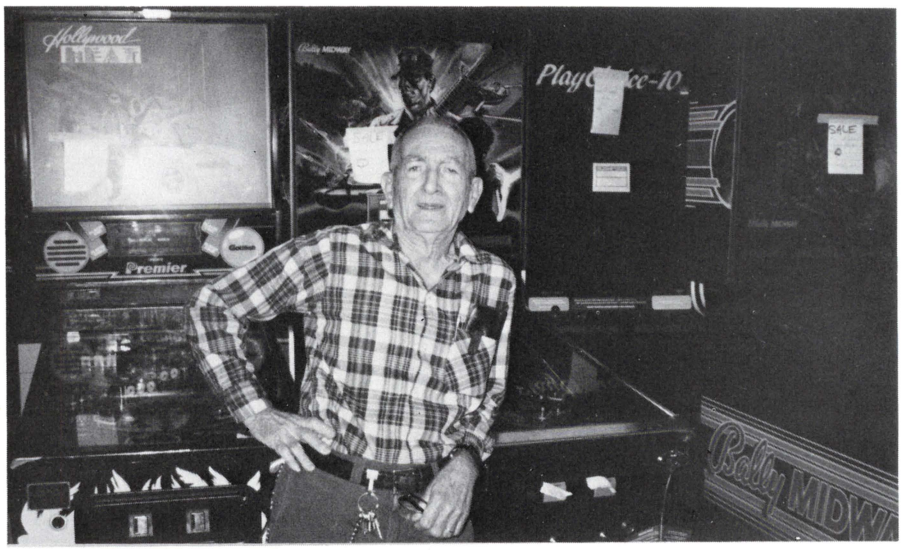
those changes are incorporated on machines it ships. "My motto," he says,"is simple: I only do as good as my customers do."

Boasberg lists a third reason for the large volume of business he does outside of Louisiana: he has a responsive service department. Boasberg has five men in the mechanics section, and two in the refurbishing (cosmetic) section. The company trains all its new men. Boasberg gives an example of the kind of work his men do for local operators: most customers, he says, get same- or next-day service. And that goes for sales, too.

Finally, Boasberg says, he can arrange for lower shipping cost that many dealers can. How so? All the shipping companies, he says, are vying for his business because there is very little outbound freight from New Orleans and because he does so much shipping. In some cases, he says, he can get a 50 percent discount on freight charges.

Just how much does he ship? An



Milton Junod has been with the company over 30 years.

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average of 25 games a week, Boasberg says. And just to shore up his claim, he gives me a quick tour of one of his warehouses. ("Take messages, and tell them I'll call them back, please.")

Out in the warehouse, there are boxes everywhere. At times, Boasberg explains, 60 percent of his warehouse space--he has two warehouses--is filled with packing materials. "Thirty days," he says, "is a long time for us to keep anything in stock."

11:30: "Hey, what's happening these days in Sacramento? Sure, I can ship them tomorrow." No sooner than he's hung up, the phone rings again. This time it's Kingsport, Tenn.

11:45: Boasberg holds a log up and says, "Look, more than 20 calls have come in today."

I ask him what percentage of his sales used games represent? The split, he says, used to be 50/50, used games vs. new games. Now, however, it's 80/20. Why? New games sales dropped at the end of the video-game boom, he volunteers. And here in this part of the country, he says, the oil-and-gas industry bottomed out, leaving everyone without much money to buy new games.

Is that a problem for him? No, used games are starting to hold their value better than they used to, he says, because there are fewer games produced and the games are better than ever. He adds that he also does a good business in used kits.

12:00 Noon: Boasberg breaks for lunch--a sandwich at his desk, and the local TV news.

12:30: The phones are ringing again. Wheaton, Md., is calling. Boasberg asks, "What kind of location do you want them for?"

All the company's shipping is done in the afternoon. Boasberg starts on his bills of lading. He fills out an average of five a day, sometimes as many as ten. Once he's finished, he'll give his men a list of games to pack. He also writes out the sales orders and then has the computer print out the invoices.

2:00: What's the largest order you've ever filled? I ask. Eighty games to an export deal, Boasberg answers.

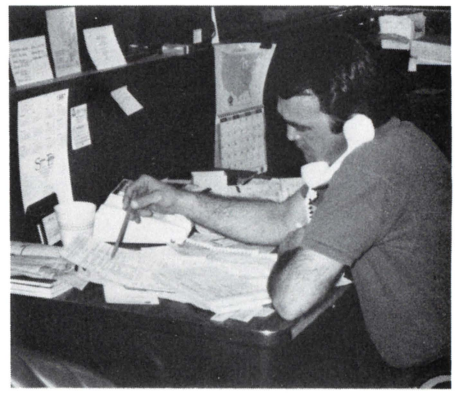
Been doing this long? Boasberg prefaces his answer by saying that he's been in every area of the coin-op business: he was with Bally in Europe for about four years, running a distributorship/operating company in Ireland; he worked in marketing on the West Coast for about two years, with Atari; and he spent six months with Meadows Games, in sales and marketing. He gets to the point, however, when he says, "I've been selling used games for Dad since I was 15 years old." At 39, that makes him a veteran of some 25 years.

3:15: In between phone calls, I ask why New Orleans Novelty started selling used games in the first place? "To inject new business into our routes," he says.

Does the company confine itself to videos and kits? No, he answers, pins and kiddie rides are also part of the inventory he moves.

The clincher: What's the importance of used games in the industry today? Boasberg's answer: "The bottom line on any game--whether it be a video, a pinball, a kiddie ride, or a kit--is how well it does in the used-game market."

4:00: Boasberg checks out for the day. But he's still got some tough "decisions" to make: he umpires baseball at one of the playgrounds, and the nine- and 10-year-olds in the league, he says, don't let him get by with much.



Eddie spends most of his day on the phone.

NYSCMA hosts second trade show

More than 300 attendees from New York, surrounding states, and Canada gathered at the Turf Inn in Albany, N.Y. in April for the second annual New York State Coin Machine Association (NYSCMA) trade show.

The show attracted 23 exhibiting companies in 42 booths. Combined this year with the annual meeting of NYSCMA members, it offered two educational seminars by Shuja Haque of Rock-Ola; a management seminar by Ann Continelli, IRS taxpayer service specialist; and a panel discussion on laser discs with Vic Conte, moderator, of Victor Conte Sales; Ted Howell of Mobile Record Service; Don Liberatore of Don Records; and Joe Pankus of Seeburg Corporation.

Bob Fay of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) addressed members at the business meeting, reviewing the history of coin machine manufacturers and noting the losses suffered due to illegal imports. Fay directed members' attention to copyright laws, trademark laws, fraud by wire, mail fraud, and smuggling. "Currently," he said, "the Supreme Court is considering the role of customs in the confiscation or banning of illegal boards as they enter the country."

Five exhibitors received special awards for their booths: Betson Enterprises, best all-around exhibit; T.O.P. Distributing, best organized; J-S Sales Company, most attractive; and Upstate Distributing and Coin Machine Distributors, most impressive. According to Dick Driscoll, chairman of the awards committee, awarding prizes "was a means of sharing the appreciation of the leadership for the participation and contribution of the exhibitors in helping to make the show so successful."

Plaques were presented to retiring board member Bob Prescott of Valley Vending for his services to the association and to Duke Huntington of Upstate Vending as coinman of the year. Door prizes were contributed by several exhibitors. The show was professionally managed by Matterson Associates.

Exhibitors and technicians mingle among products on display.

Dan Morin, left, NYSCMA board member, and Bill Roenbeck of T.O.P. Distributing.

Dick Driscoll, left, awards chairman, discusses show with Curt Matterson, NYSCMA executive director.

Vic Conte, left, trade show co-chairman, with NYSCMA president Bill LaHart and Linda LaHart.

TEN YEARS AGO

In June of 1977, Play Meter editor and publisher Ralph Lally observed that "while pinball continues to soar, and phonographs and tables games are at least remaining stable, novelty games--especially video games--seem to be slipping..." He went on to say that there were just too many duds being produced. Said Lally, "Even the biggest and best producers of video games will admit to their share of losers."

The solution? "Proper field testing is one answer to the problem," Lally noted. Another could possibly be in engineering. "A manufacturer sinks a pile of money into an R&D effort and may still come up with a dud. Somebody's going to have to eat those engineering costs..." So he suggested the consumer market as one alternative for the losers. "At least the manufacturers will have gotten some additional mileage out of his engineering dollar."

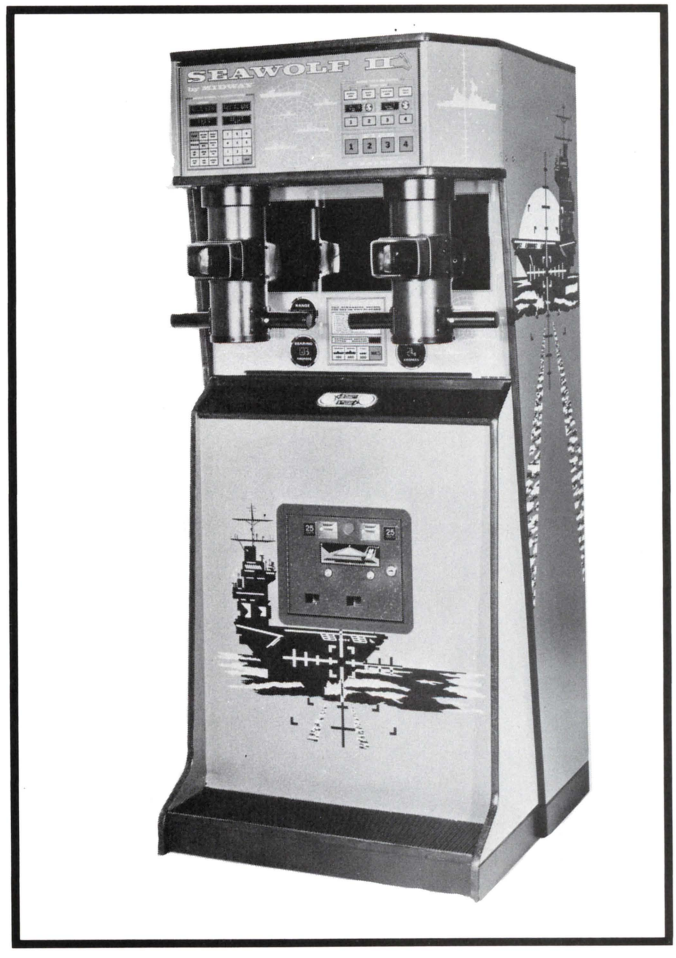
However, Lally's most fortuitous prediction said, "The best thing is to avoid producing a dud. I doubt this can be done but its accomplishment may be found in some new system of licensing. Instead of each manufacturer having its own private R&D, why not have several privately held engineering firms that would conduct market research, dream up new games, build and test them, and offer them for sale on a bid basis."

Joe Robbins was our Coinman Interview 10 years ago when he was with Empire Distributing. In the period right before the explosion of *Asteroids* and *Space Invaders*, Robbins said, "I think we've come out of a boom period. We've passed the peak and we're in a plateau area. Certainly video games have peaked." *[We recently talked with Joe about doing a follow-up coinman and he has agreed. It will be sometime this year.]*

Roger Sharpe, in his monthly column *Critic's Corner*, said the summer would be hot for pinballs. "One of the reasons is the strong line-up of new pins," he said. Some of those pins were Gottlieb's *Big Hit, Team One*, and *Jungle Queen*, Williams' *Liberty Bell*, and Sonic's *Super Straight*. Sharpe also reviewed his first year of authoring *Critic's Corner*. He said, "When it started, I didn't think it would survive, but it's been a year and hopefully it's accomplished something." [*We are proud to say that Roger is still writing his* Critic's Corner *column and has expanded to other features occasionally. Thanks, Roger.]*

Some of the new products being introduced in our issue that month were *Sprint 8* by Atari, Midway's *Road Runner*, Bally's *Hang Glider*, and Sunbird's *Super Bowler*. Bally's *Sea Wolf* was the subject of an article by Dick Welu. He concluded that if you are looking for a sure fire winner of a game "it should resemble an upright coffin, contain ball bearings, not have the firing button under the little finger, use a pull-out six inch step, paint a cabbage on the front, not use the name Charlie the Tuna, screw up the sound so that one target laughs, and utilize a change-up. Don't blame me if that sounds ridiculous; Midway did it and it's a hell of a game!"

Coinman Joe Robbins



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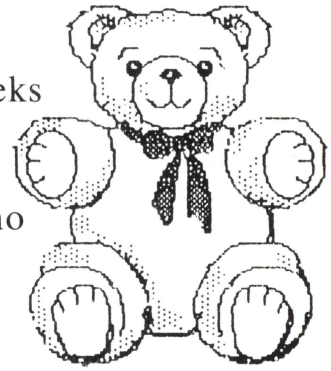

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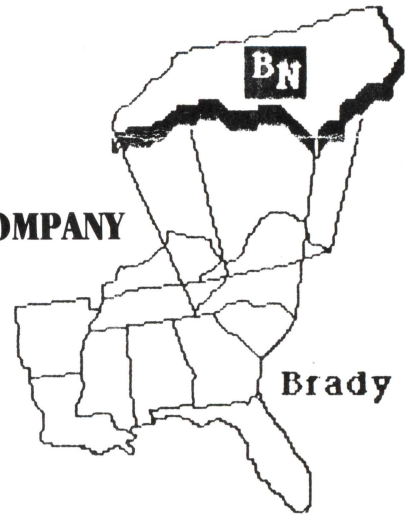

Building operating empires in England

BY DAVID SNOOK

When you operate 30,000 pieces of equipment, you are a mighty big operator on whichever side of the Atlantic you are located. But when your principal rival has the same number and the next largest operator is only a couple of thousand pieces behind, then there's a royal battle on your hands.

The empire builders in this case are Associated Leisure, Bell-Fruit Services, and Bass Leisure, respectively, the three largest street operators in the United Kingdom. Although they will officially deny that they are out to upstage one another, there's little doubt that they spend a great deal of time looking over each other's shoulders.

How does *anyone* build one operation of that size, let alone three? How can three companies get their grips on half a country's principal machine sites?

The clue is in the system.

Britain's 70,000 pubs are the creme de la creme of coin machine operating. In each you'll find up to two slot machines (officially designated "amusements with prizes" because the maximum input is only 15 cents and top prize $6), a video game, a jukebox, and a pool table. One operator will usually supply all of them. But the volume comes from the fact that nearly all of those pubs are owned by breweries.

Some of the pubs--the better ones--are run by managers, while the rest are rented out to tenants. In either case, they keep a firm grip on *who* will operate the machines in them and will take the lion's share of the machine take.

The reason that Britain has such a successful, yet criminal-free, slot business is because payouts are low, operators must be certificated after investigation by the authorities, and profit-sharing on slots (but not on "pure" amusements) is illegal. So the operator takes a modest rent and the breweries take a major slice of the cash box proceeds.

Slot machine returns are generally several times higher than on other equipment, which are therefore regarded as somewhat ancillary. Because of the high returns on slots, the breweries naturally keep a keen eye on what goes on and usually have their own "machine controllers" to deal with the operators.

The system that has evolved is that the brewery will appoint a small number of operators to its nominated list. Those making the list are then free to solicit business within the brewery's tenanted pubs while the brewery pinpoints who will operate in its managed houses. Breweries can grant up to and over 500 sites at a time to an operator explaining how the massive operations have been built.

A nationally-based operator like Associated Leisure may deal with up to 30 different breweries dotted all over England, Wales, and Scotland, negotiating deals with each one over the rents which the brewery will pay from the cash box proceeds. In return, the operator is expected to install the very latest slot machine, from one of Britain's half-dozen

specialist manufacturers at around $1,500 each, and all other equipment. He will have to maintain them in good working order with downtime measured in minutes rather than hours because income is vital; he will agree to replace equipment virtually on demand, and often within 13 weeks (switching it to another site); and he will agree to provide very sophisticated computerized return details to the brewery.

The latter condition is quite normal and reflects the degree of importance that brewers attach to slot machine proceeds. In some cases, slot machine earnings represent up to 60 percent of giant breweries' net profits; not forgetting that with no investment, except the salary of the machine controller, all the brewery actually does is give permission to the operator to use a square yard of carpet in a pub lounge, so all of the income from the machines goes straight to the bottom line.

The concentration, therefore, on machine performances has led to data retrieval becoming big business. All machines are fitted with a "data port" and the operators' collectors bring an attache case filled with computer technology, plugs into the data port, and extracts all the information on coins in/coins out; tokens in, tokens out; door open dates and for how long, and a stream of other information. After emptying, the collector returns to headquarters and inputs the information from his interrogator straight into the company's mainframe computer and the actual count of the cash takes place for comparison. A stream of print-out material then goes to the brewer with his share of the machine take.

That's how sophisticated British coin machine operating has become, producing probably the most streamlined street location operating system in the world. But when you are playing with multi-million pound businesses on which the fate of major brewers could stand or fall, it has to be.

And so the big companies have been built.

Associated Leisure was traditionally the largest, regarded as the largest street location operator in the world as it amalgamated with or took over smaller operators between 1960 and 1975. For years its machine holdings hovered at around the 25,000 to 27,000 mark, established by a remarkable man named Roy Ashworth. A retired small operator Ashworth displayed immense powers of negotiation and manipulation to build his Associated Leisure empire into a public company.

Bell-Fruit's Paul Cox

Behind Ashworth came a small group of elite companies, Bell-Fruit Services, MAM Inn Play, and Music Hire Group. The largest of them, however, was 10,000 pieces adrift of Ashworth's holdings.

But early in 1986 changes began to take place in the status quo, triggered by falling beer consumption and a natural desire by the brewers to replace that lost income with something. Pressure on rents began to mount. The brewers wanted more income from better machines but pegged rental levels. Unreasonable? Undoubtedly, but when you pay the piper you call the tune.

Operators began to cut rents to stay in the race and instead put pressure on the manufacturers to keep their prices down. The manufacturers were under pressure to spend more on research and development to make the better machines the breweries demanded, but at the same time were squeezed by operators desperate to balance the books in the face of fading rental margins.

There's the rub--and the reminder for U.S. operators jealous of those 500-machine deals. You can lose them just as fast!

A major shift in British machine operation strategy began to emerge. Big operators, searching for ways to cut

Associated Leisure's Roy Ashworth

costs, took maps of their operational areas and studied machine density. If technicians were covering 50 sites in one area, conceivably they could cover twice as many sites in the same area *if* the company had those sites.

In-filling became a new word in operator's vocabularies as they bought up smaller operators in those areas of least density. It suited the smaller operators because they were finding it harder to compete.

The race was on.

The first hint of what was to come went largely unnoticed back in November of 1984. Bell-Fruit Services bought the southern half of Music Hire Group's operation--1,750 sites containing 3,000 machines. Bell-Fruit didn't actually buy the pubs, merely the machines in them but on-site and naturally with the consent of the breweries concerned.

In-filling had begun, although no one really considered it at the time. Music Hire, based in Northern England, realized that its operation in the southern half of the country was too sparse to operate economically and therefore sold its holdings in that area to Bell-Fruit Services whose managing director, Paul Cox, was astutely aware that he could merge those sites with his own and operate on the supermarket principle of high volume--small profit combining to provide satisfactory results.

Cox's vision could not be faulted as it gradually became apparent that everyone was going to have to do it.

Six months later he was off with his checkbook again, this time adding 2,700 machines from Brewery Utilities, an operating company actually owned by one of Britain's biggest breweries that had decided after a short toe-in-the-water test that it didn't want to become its own operator after all.

It must have become obvious to the all-powerful Associated Leisure that it would not be long before its rival, Bell-Fruit Services, was challenging for the top spot in the numbers game as it was being called. Both Paul Cox and Roy Ashworth contemptuously dismissed any suggestion that size for size's sake came into their actions, but was nevertheless creeping in.

And then in January 1986 a third contender stepped into the ring, Bass Leisure. Under the leadership of Peter Sherlock, this subsidiary of a major brewery had lain "doggo" for some years on around 15,000 pieces of equipment. But, also recognizing the necessity to infill, Sherlock negotiated for and got, the 8,000-piece operation of Ladbroke Machine Services and the 3,000 machines of Monarch Leisure and suddenly put itself into the number two spot with 26,000 pieces of equipment, just behind Associated Leisure's 27,000.

Bass Leisure therefore shaped its own challenge for supremacy in the numbers game, but it wasn't to be. Sherlock displayed his own disinterest in big numbers for its own sake by keeping his hand firmly on his pocket book, leaving the field open to the main contenders.

Both Associated Leisure and Bell-Fruit Services then began to gobble up small operators. Bell-Fruit bought Southern Leisure's 560-machine operation in April of last year while Associated Leisure added the 1,000-machines of Barry Robinson Leisure in October. Bass Leisure was being left behind.

Bell-Fruit took over Lincolnshire Automatics' 650 machines in November

and then became the first British operator to break the 30,000 machine barrier--and to take over the largest operator in the country, when it bought 990 machines from Regent Automatic Supply, also in November.

Bell-Fruit was leap-frogged in March of this year, however, when Associated Leisure bought Appleby Glade's 2,000-machine operation.

And that's where it stands. Associated Leisure with 32,000, Bell-Fruit at 31,000 and Bass Leisure with 27,000. The rest are trailing 15,000 or so behind.

Not that the figures really matter. Sure it's a matter of pride to be number one in terms of size, but at the end of the day all the contenders are concerned only with the economics of operating successfully. Being the largest is merely icing on the cake.

The more serious overtones for the British trade relate to the consequences of the checkbook-empire-building. Small and medium-sized operators are finding it hard to live with what is going on with their profit margins. If the giants have to buy to bring unit operating costs down, then unless the smaller operators have virtually all of the sites within the strict confines of their own town, then logically they have little hope of surviving.

The breweries are going to have to address this problem before too long. They clearly cannot permit a situation where the pub business is served by so few; it cuts their choice and the competitive edge, which is what produces the high profits. After all, if a brewer wants to keep rents down, he does it by playing one operator against another, but he'll defeat his own objective if he creates a situation where there are no other operators.

Fascinating. And destined to become more so as the economics of size begin to bite still further.

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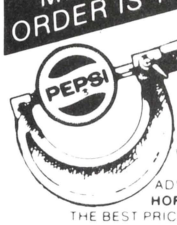

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The Federal Law

by B. G. Hauser

This is the first in a series of articles on the payphone industry. Future topics include: The State Laws, Rules & Regulations, Entering the Business, and How to Choose a Payphone.

The breakup of AT&T has created a vast array of entrepreneurial opportunities in the field of telecommunications. The payphone industry was one of the early ones thought simple and profitable. It's easy to imagine large amounts of money going into those black machines considering the number of people always using them.

Only one obstacle had to be overcome before entering such a big, potential business. The law did not allow privately owned payphones. Only the telephone companies were allowed to install and profit from them. After several legal battles fought by payphone manufacturers, associations and private citizens, the law was changed. Registration of coin-operated telephones under part 68 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations (Memorandum Opinions and Order) 49 Fed. Reg. 277631 (released June 15, 1984, Payphone Order) allows both small and large businesses to own coin-op telephones and earn extra revenue just as they can do through ownership of other vending machines.

Notwithstanding the FCC's decision, the individual states determine the ground rules and profit opportunities for vendors and users of this new device. Still some further clarifications were needed and, finally, the FCC, on April 26, 1985, reaffirmed its previous ruling legalizing the operation of private pay telephones. The FCC rules that a pay telephone may be places anywhere providing interstate calls can be made from the instrument. The commission also clarified its positions concerning intrastate phone calls made from privately owned coin-operated telephones, leaving use and rates up to individual state public utilities commissions.

The FCC's Payphone Order requires telephone companies to connect Part 68 approved privately owned, instrument--implemented COT's to the nationwide public switched telephone network and provides the technical and procedural standards under which such inter-connections can be made. The decision also permits the use of these instruments for interstate purposed. In doing so, the Payphone Order applies to pay telephones the fundamental competitive principles underlying telephone network interconnections.

Specifically, the Payphone Order permits registration of pay telephones that (a) are instrument implemented (i.e. rely on internal capabilities and not on the facilities of the telephone company's central office for phone service) and (b) are attached to regular company subscriber lines. Registration of these instruments is conducted pursuant to Part 68 of the Commission's rules. Such registration programs have been established to ensure that telephone equipment connected to the network will not result in harm to the network.

The basic cornerstone has been established and now the states have the authority to determine whether local and intrastate services may be resold (and under what terms and conditions) and to establish tariff requirements respecting the features and markings on coin telephones. Under the PUC's regulations the benefit of private ownership of payphones under the Payphone Order may, however, be diminished by certain state regulatory schemes. The FCC decision governs the use of these instruments only for interstate purposes. It is the PUC's role to determine the conditions under which privately owned payphones, including credit card and coin-operated, can be used for local or intrastate service.

Up to now, 44 states have approved private ownership of pay telephones. The rules and regulations of each state must be carefully analyzed to establish a cross-check between those rules and regulations and the technical capabilities of different products on the market. This is essential to insure a product's compliance with the rules and regulations of the state in which it is intended to be used.

The up to date list of states that have approved the use of private payphones or COCOTS (customer owned coin operated telephone) is as follows:

Alabama	Nebraska
Arizona	Nevada
California	New Hampshire
Colorado	New Jersey
Delaware	New Mexico
District of Columbia	New York
Florida	North Carolina
Georgia	North Dakota
Idaho	Ohio
Illinois	Oregon
Indiana	Pennsylvania
Iowa	Rhode Island
Kansas	South Carolina
Kentucky	South Dakota
Louisiana	Tennessee
Maryland	Texas
Massachusetts	Utah
Michigan	Vermont
Minnesota	Virginia
Mississippi	Washington
Missouri	Wisconsin
Montana	Wyoming

The states of Maine, Hawaii and West Virginia have proceedings underway while Connecticut has a state moratorium on intrastate telecommunications competitors through 1987. Arkansas (interim decision) and Oklahoma have disallowed them from local and intrastate resale although they may be installed for interstate toll service. Alaska, at present, has no activity on COCOT regulation.

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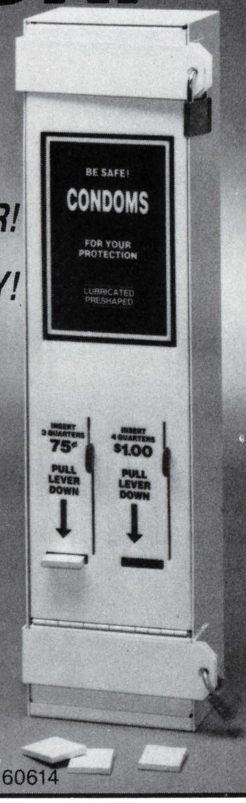

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Billboard Top Ten

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Hot 100

	TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1.	WITH OR WITHOUT YOU	U2 ISLAND 7-99469/ATLANTIC
2.	LOOKING FOR A NEW LOVE	JODY WATLEY MCA 52956
3.	(I JUST) DIED IN YOUR ARMS	CUTTING CREW VIRGIN 7-99481
4.	LA ISLA BONITA	MADONNA SIRE 7-28425/WARNER BROS.
5.	THE LADY IN RED	CHRIS DE BURGH A&M 2848
6.	HEAT OF THE NIGHT	BRYAN ADAMS A&M 2921
7.	BIG LOVE	FLEETWOOD MAC WARNER BROS. 7-28398
8.	YOU KEEP ME HANGIN' ON	KIM WILDE MCA 53024
9.	TALK DIRTY TO ME	POISON ENIGMA 5686/CAPITOL
10.	ALWAYS	ATLANTIC STARR WARNER BROS. 7-28455

Country

	TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1.	TO KNOW HIM IS TO LOVE HIM LINDA RONSTADT, EMMYLOU HARRIS	DOLLY PARTON, WARNER BROS. 7-28492
2.	CAN'T STOP MY HEART FROM LOVING YOU	THE O'KANES COLUMBIA 38-06606
3.	IT TAKES A LITTLE RAIN	THE OAK RIDGE BOYS MCA 53010
4.	JULIA	CONWAY TWITTY MCA 53034
5.	I WILL BE THERE	DAN SEALS EMI-AMERICA 8377/CAPITOL
6.	DOMESTIC LIFE	JOHN CONLEE COLUMBIA 38-06707
7.	GIRLS RIDE HORSES TOO	JODY RODMAN MTM 70283/CAPITOL
8.	TOO MANY RIVERS	THE FORESTER SISTERS WARNER BROS. 7-28442
9.	PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER	GARY MORRIS WARNER BROS. 7-28468
10.	TIL' I'M TOO OLD TO DIE YOUNG	MOE BANDY MCA/CURB 53033/MCA

Adult Contemporary

	TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1.	JUST TO SEE HER	SMOKEY ROBINSON MOTOWN 6226
2.	LA ISLA BONITA	MADONNA SIRE 7-28425.WARNER BROS.
3.	THE LADY IN RED	CHRIS DE BURGH A&M 2848
4.	THE FINER THINGS	STEVE WINWOOD ISLAND 7-28498/WARNER BROS.
5.	SE LA	LIONEL RICHIE MOTOWN 1883
6.	ALWAYS	ATLANTIC STARR WARNER BROS. 7-28455
7.	BABY GRAND	BILLY JOEL FEATURING RAY CHARLES COLUMBIA 38-06994
8.	SAME OLE LOVE (365 DAYS A YEAR)	ANITA BAKER ELEKTRA 7-69484
9.	DON'T DREAM IT'S OVER	CROWDED HOUSE CAPITOL 5614
10.	I KNEW YOU WERE WAITING (FOR ME) AND GEORGE MICHAEL	ARETHA FRANKLIN ARISTA 1-9559

Hot Black

	TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1.	ALWAYS	ATLANTIC STARR WARNER BROS. 7-28455
2.	JUST TO SEE HER	SMOKEY ROBINSON MOTOWN 1877
3.	BACK AND FORTH	CAMEO ATLANTA ARTISTS 888 385-7/POLYGRAM
4.	THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN LOVE WITH GREGORY HINES	LUTHER VANDROSS EPIC 34-06978/E.P.A.
5.	HAPPY	SURFACE COLUMBIA 38-06611
6.	IT'S BEEN SO LONG	MELBA MOORE CAPITOL 5681
7.	I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOUR LOVE	FREDDIE JACKSON CAPITOL 5680
8.	GO ON WITHOUT YOU	SHIRLEY MURDOCK ELEKTRA 7-69480
9.	HEAD TO TOE	LISA LISA & CULT JAM COLUMBIA 38-07008
10.	SAME OLE LOVE (365 DAYS A YEAR)	ANITA BAKER ELEKTRA 7-69484

COMPUTER ABUSE AND FRAUD: CAN IT BE CONTROLLED?

BY RICHARD A. WILDEY

Computers are here to stay. As the world becomes more computer literate, the prospect of loss due to error, abuse and fraud increases dramatically. Losses sustained by businesses in the United States due to computer abuse and fraud are approaching $1 billion annually. And that accounts only for the portion which is reported. Some organizations find it too embarrassing to report the fact that they have had a loss due to a probable lack of management control.

We have indicated two areas where monetary losses can be attributed to the improper use of a computer: error or abuse.

Errors are unintentional and may result from clerical mistakes, incorrect applications of accounting principles, or the misinterpretation of facts. Errors occur when someone doesn't follow proper procedures or there are not any procedures to follow. For example, input data isn't properly balanced prior to updating files. Or, programs are not properly tested resulting in reports that are incorrect (good luck if these are used to make important decisions).

Abuse is when actions are taken against computers and related software which make a computer the object of a crime, or a tool used to commit a crime. This can be anything from the theft of a computer to the fraudulent manipulation of data generated by a computer.

Can these be prevented? Not always, but they can be held to a minimum by controlling the data processing environment. This includes the user. Remember, a computer left to itself can do nothing. It requires the human element before it is able to function in any way. Computers don't make errors and they don't commit fraud. They are machines that do only what they are told to do, people do make errors and people can be abusive! Now that we have decided that we need to control the data processing environment, just what are we speaking of?

CONTROL-to verify or regulate;**DATA PROCESSING ENVIRONMENT**-the hardware (ie. physical computer and related devices), the software (ie. computer programs), data files (ie. the information being used for decision making), and the user (ie. the human element, that part of the environment which makes mistakes and can commit fraud).

Controls are of two varieties, general and application. General controls, which relate to the design, security and use of programs and data files, are procedures in the data processing department that assure programs operate properly and that unauthorized changes are prevented or detected on a timely basis. Application controls, which relate to completeness, accuracy and validity of data input and updating, are specific to a given financial application system (ie. accounts receivable, sales, etc.).

To err is human they rightfully say, and to prevent it is down right impossible. Indications of possible errors in data processing are often more readily detected than clues to potential abuse and fraud. This is because there is usually no attempt to cover up errors that are honest mistakes. Also, managers should be more familiar with the types of errors that can occur in data processing systems, and therefore more alert to signs that such errors may exist. This understanding of the system and its controls helps management to detect and correct errors on a timely basis.

Abuse is also human and even more difficult to prevent. It can also be detected and corrected on a timely basis by the use of appropriate controls. Abuse however is a problem! It is intentional and people go to great lengths to hide it. It may or may not be illegal, depending on what was done and where it was done. For example, a computer fraud may be committed in Colorado by using a television, radio or video tape recorder without authorization. This is because of the definition of computer used by the state which includes "any electronic device performing memory functions in the manipulation of electronic or magnetic impulses." The Nevada law explicitly excludes devices "such as a radio, television transmitter or receiver, television camera, video tape recorder, sound recorder, phonograph or similar device." We could go on since 26 states have computer fraud laws all of which vary to some degree.

To gain a perspective of the problem, let's look at the extent of computer abuse. Remember, we're approaching $1 billion annually. The following figures were first published in 1979 by Brandt Allen and based on Donn Parker's (who is considered one of the foremost researchers of computer abuse) studies of 150 major computer fraud cases.

CRIME AGAINST	AVERAGE LOSS
Corporations	$621,000
Banks and savings and loans	193,000
State and local government	329,000
Federal government	45,000
Account/transaction/inventory manipulation	1,300,000
Payment to creditors	324,000
Payment to employees	139,000
Office managers	274,000

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Other staff	48,000
Clerks or tellers	37,000
Computer operators	33,000
Computer programmers	20,000
Data entry personnel	8,000

The computer criminal appears not to be distinguishable from anyone in the white collar population. However, there are some factors which may point to an individual more likely to commit a computer fraud such as those with situational pressures and opportunity without the fear of being caught. Computer criminals usually work for the organization being victimized and have never been involved in any other serious illegal activities. One profile describes them as married males, 25 to 40 years of age with two children, highly intelligent, and having well defined career goals. They do it either for material gain or just to beat the system. Sound like anyone you know? Of course it does so there goes the theory that if you can describe them, you won't hire them!

Considering the dollar amount involved, why then aren't all cases of computer crime reported? Many victims consider the crime to be a weakness in their business operations. Therefore, reporting it would be considered embarrassing. In fact, some think the publicity would jeopardize future business opportunities. Also, if the fraud is reported and not subsequently prosecuted, the likelihood exists that the alleged criminal would sue for defamation of character or wrongful termination of employment. Another important reason why all computer crime is not reported is that all computer crime is not detected. In fact, most computer crime is detected by accident.

Most computer crimes occur in an environment of little or no control. This would tend to indicate a strong need for a controlled environment. Contrary to popular belief, control of computer systems extends beyond physical security (ie. locking the computer room door, and storing copies of data files and programs off premises). As stated before, everything from the user to programs being executed must be controlled. This calls for a system of internal accounting controls covering both the computer and its related components and the completeness, accuracy, and validity of input and update data.

Computers are not normally the object of a fraud, but the tool used to commit the fraud. It is the data input to, stored by, or reported on that is the object of a computer fraud. The importance of physical security however is in preventing access to the data by unauthorized persons.

As stated before, the data processing environment can be secured or protected by the use of controls like the following:

. passwords--	they prevent unauthorized access to data;
. door locks--	they prevent unauthorized access to the data center itself;
. segregation of duties--	this prevents someone from acting alone and requires collusion between two or more people;
. training programs--	these prevent errors due to unskilled employees;

. on-line-edits-- these help prevent errors from incorrect data entry; and

. proper testing-- the proper testing of data processing systems helps prevents processing errors.

Detective controls point out errors and/or abuses after they have been made, in order to correct them on a timely basis. These include controls such as the following:

. alarms-- these detect things like fire and burglaries;

. edit listings-- when reviewed properly, these can be used to detect processing errors;

. logs-- these can be used to detect unauthorized processing or access;

. report reconciliation-- this process can detect processing errors.

The third objective of controls is correction. Corrective controls are used to prevent things from happening again. Corrective controls consist of establishing policies and procedures that would have prevented or detected the disaster in the first place. For obvious reasons these are the most expensive to implement, like closing the barn door after the cow gets out.

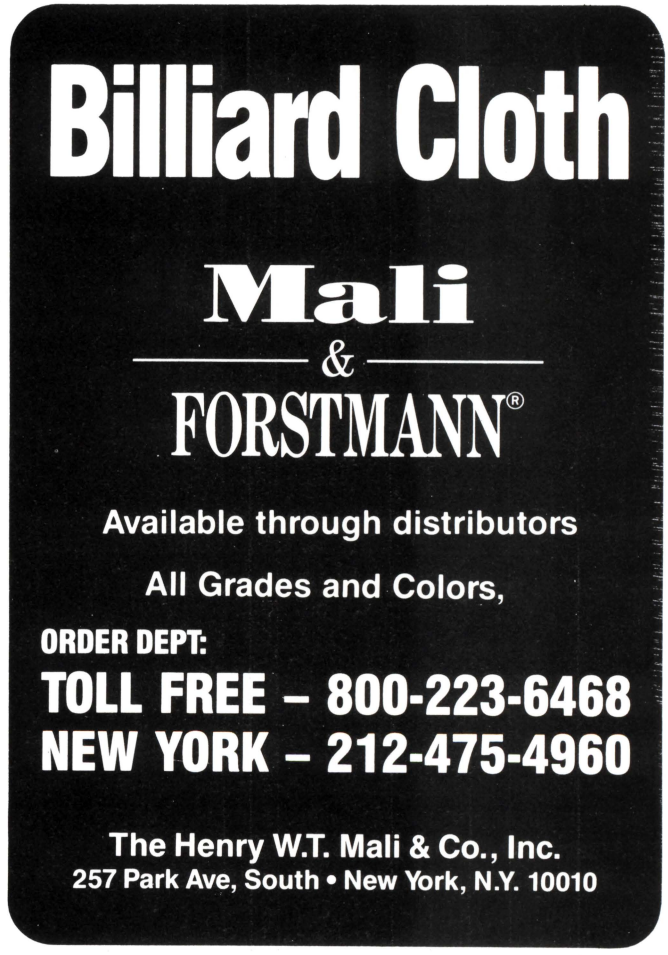
To achieve these objectives, a combination of general and application controls, supported by top management are required. No one control regardless of how good it is, or how well it is implemented can do the job alone. And no system of controls, regardless of how well designed can succeed without the support of top management.

How are you doing in regards to computer security? Answer the following questions, and then think of the importance of your data processing capabilities to maintaining your business and future growth:

YES	NO		
___	___	1.	Does your organization have policies and procedures providing for information security?
___	___	2.	Is your computer and all related equipment maintained in a physically secure area?
___	___	3.	Does your organization have a training program for security and control of vital information?
___	___	4.	Does your organization have a documented methodology for the development and maintenance of data processing systems?
___	___	5.	Does top management take an active role in the development of policies and procedures, including data processing and security?
___	___	6.	Has an evaluation of the data processing environment been performed by anyone outside the department?
___	___	7.	Are input documents kept for a sufficient period of time to allow investigation of discrepancies?
___	___	8.	Are all detected errors logged, investigated and corrected on a timely basis?
___	___	9.	Is there a contingency plan documenting procedures to be followed in the event computer processing is interrupted?
___	___	10.	Does management identify and prioritize all applications critical to the operation of the business on an on-going basis?

If you have answered "NO" to any of these questions, serious thought should be given to how well your organization is doing at controlling its information resources. Computer abuse can be controlled, but it takes a conscious effort, and that effort must be directed and continuously supported by top management.

Richard Wildey is an EDP Audit Manager with the Computer Audit Assistance Group of Coopers & Lybrand in Miami.



Darts...

Electronic darts are being touted as the most important development in years for coin-operators in the amusement & music industry. Why? Because dart games on location attract regular — even loyal — players. In short, a potential year-round bonanza!

By encouraging player interest in darts — primarily through leagues which have been the mainstay of pool and bowling for years — operators can significantly expand income opportunities!

What Is AMOA Doing About Darts?

The Amusement & Music Operators Association has formed the AMOA National Dart Association. Its sole purpose is to increase operator and player interest in competitive dart teams and league activity nationwide. To this end, it sanctions players sponsored by AMOA National Dart Association member operators. It also has developed standardized rules & regulations — including handicapping criteria — to provide equal competitive opportunity throughout the country. Additionally, each spring it sponsors the AMOA National Team Dart Tournament to recognize the best teams and players. And it has produced an operator's handbook — as well as a video and cassette tapes — on "How to Organize Dart Leagues."

To join the AMOA National Dart Association an operator must first be a member of AMOA.

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For more information on the AMOA National Dart Association — or AMOA membership, programs and services — call or write today!

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BIG CHOICE CRANE CHASER LIGHT BULB MODIFICATION

by Frank "The Crank" Seninsky

I have been written several articles on merchandising and redemption equipment. This has been my hobby and I find it rewarding to be called "The Expert" in this particular segment of our industry. The Alpha-Omega Amusement Service Department is constantly making design improvements (electrical and mechanical) to the equipment we operate and sell. Reducing service calls and cutting down on parts costs is always a priority.

Operators of *Big Choice* cranes, the crane model I still feel is the best in the industry, are spending a lot of money replacing the "chaser bulbs." These bulbs are very expensive, around $3 to $4 each. I have experienced an average of three to four of these bulbs burning out each week on every *Big Choice* triple crane. There are approximately 50 of these bulbs on a triple crane.

The problem is that these bulbs were designed in Europe to operate at 50 cycles and we are putting 60 cycle current through the filament. What you have is what I call "premature uncontrolled filament fatigue" (PUFF). When one bulb blows, another bulb (wired in series with it) also goes out (even though the second bulb is still good). To change the cabinet wiring harness so bulb pairs won't be in series involves just too much work and expense. It is also not possible to replace the bulbs with the same size 60 cycle type simply because nobody makes them. Operators are caught in a planned obsolescence cycle and must keep spending large amounts of money replacing these failed bulbs.

Jimmy, our head tech, has been working on a simple plug-in board to act as a line conditioner and prolong the life of these bulbs. The project has just been completed and tested and it works!

Figure 1 shows how our Chaser Light Line Conditioner (CLLC) Board can be plugged into the *Big Choice* Lamp Chaser Board (LCB). The LCB AC plug (pin end) is lifted off Pins 1 and 2 of the Lamp Chaser Board and pushed onto Pins A and B of the new CLLC Board. One new wire goes from Pin 1 of the CLLC to Pin 1 of the LCB. Another new wire goes from 2 of the CLLC to Pin 2 of the LCB. And that's it!

This board is not available anywhere except from Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales. It costs $50 ($40 each in lots of 10). This is my first chance to have my fellow operators support the huge amount of money that Alpha-Omega spends on this type of R&D. On the other hand, think of the money we will lose by not selling light bulbs! This is one board that it won't pay for Korea to knock off--it's just too cheap.

New joysticks for *Ikari Warriors* and *Victory Road:* Wico Corp now makes an 8-way plug-in rotary switch joystick to replace those terrible joysticks that came on *Ikari Warriors.* Wico's model is less expensive and replacement parts are available.

HMS Monoco has more and more items for your rotaries, cranes, and new merchandisers. Shown in Figure 2 are Ira Erstling of HMS Monoco (left) and Alpha-Omega's Jimmy Iodice at the ACME. HMS now has watches, sterling jewelry, new novelty items, and even closeout items at closeout prices. You can reach Ira at (212) 691-9000.

Ira Erstling and Jimmy Iodice

I know I promised you detailed write-ups of Kramer's *Skill Dozer*, Wedges/Ledges' *Comer*, and Gamemasters' 2-player self-loading rotary, but none of these manufacturers have supplied me with any of the above yet. But I'm still waiting and will report on them as promised as soon as I can.

For further information, I can be reached at Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales, 6 Sutton Place, Edison, NJ 08837, telephone (201) 287-4990.

As always ... keep cranking!

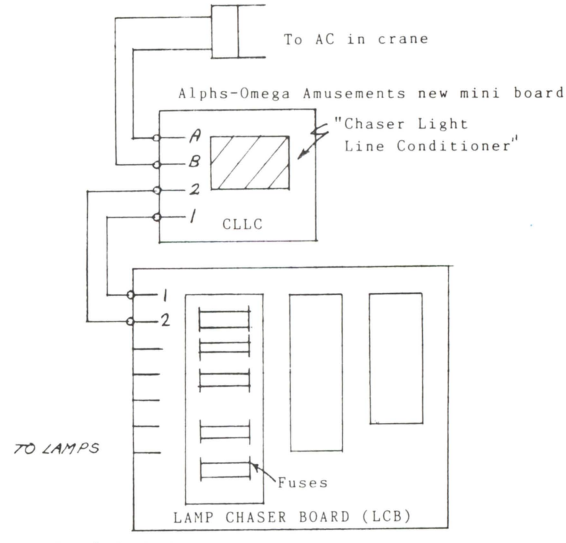


FIGURE 1: "Big Choice" Crane "Chaser Light Bulb Modification"
Alpha-Omega's new plug-in CLLC Board (Chaser Light Line Conditioner) will increase the life of the very expensive chaser light bulbs. This board only costs $50 and can be installed in less than 5 minutes.

Critic's Corner

FILLER UP: CURRENT MACHINES STRADDLE LINE AS INTERIM PIECES

By Roger C. Sharpe

I'm beginning to suspect that most of the video games coming out are being designed more for the growing home after-market than for advancing coin-op. Although the cast of characters has changed, I'm seeing a glut of video games where the action is just a side-to-side, lateral scrolling screen of oncoming enemies that need to be destroyed with artillery fire, magical weapons, swords, physical plummeting, whatever. Some are much better executions (no pun intended), but with a sense of deja vu I feel that the industry is standing still and not trying to advance available technology or striving for some new, innovative approaches to presenting action on a flat screen monitor. Other than simulations for sports or driving games, there should be other novel ways to design video play that will intrigue players. We already saw what a disenchanted playing public can mean.

Many locations now are gearing up for the summer season. Amusement parks with game rooms, seaside resorts and all the rest will be looking for filler pieces in addition to major attractions. Some of these games have been around for awhile (some may be available at phenomenal close-out prices) as well as some of the favorites in the race for "best of the rest".

Cinematronics' Redline Racer

The recent corporate change, now a subsidiary of Tradewest, will hopefully solidify Cinematronics' position in the marketplace. The addition of *Redline Racer* to the Cinemat System rounds out sports offerings that include baseball and bowling. Although this upright for one or two players (up to four players on the console) is interesting with its sixteen different levels of play, the action is similar to Atari's *Championship Sprint.*

Cinematronics has put together a decent package that has proven itself as being the type of entertainment game players like. The effects and visuals are okay and for competitive, head-to-head play, there is enough of a challenge to sustain interest on a fairly even keel for a season or two.

I'll go with a ## and see what happens in the months to come with this workable racing effort.

Data East's Last Mission

Last Mission has the same type of video visuals we've been seeing since *Xevious*, and brings to life a vertical and horizontal scrolling screen along with a fully 360-degree joystick control. The attack sequences are nice, as are the effects and underlying scenery, but somehow *Last Mission* seems dated compared to other products.

But there is a nostalgic place for the game on some floors and locations, especially for a generation of players who didn't grow up with *Time Pilot. Last Mission* is a game that could be lost in a large arcade, but might be a worthy filler in the line up. I'll go with a ##.

Romstar's Hyperdyne Sidearms

Reports about this machine have been very favorable, but I consider it to be a true leaner. In many respects, it's a *Nemesis/Gradius* clone with some extra tidbits thrown in. There is the opportunity for side-to-side two-player action and different features to pick up during the on-screen action that can boost maneuverability and firepower.

The nuances of play might help the effort on location, especially for space-shooting video players looking for the next challenge, but I wonder how long they will stay intrigued by the play and keep feeding in coins before they move on the next attraction. I'll go with a ##1/4.

Atari's Rolling Thunder

Engineered and designed by Namco, *Rolling Thunder* offers a conventional side-to-side moving game in an unconventional way only because of the articulation of the characters. The graphics are a knockout on this machine with detailed action that is nonstop from start to finish.

The storyline is the old capture-the-female-agent theme carried out in an endless array of screens as players maneuver the lead character against a host of villains using a joystick and two buttons (one for firepower, the other for jumping). What is further intriguing and challenging about *Rolling Thunder* is the strategy involved as ammunition must be picked up along the way by entering appropriately marked rooms and building up bullet supplies.

There's the necessity to master the many nuances of play to succeed to the higher levels. What I have heard from some operators and players, however, is that the game can play long, especially for those who pick up the tricks faster than others. So you have a machine which might be a contrast of extremes: fast turnaround for the average player; and long coin time for the skillful.

But I like the results and feel that *Rolling Thunder* is a solid entry that excels in its graphics and sound effects. We'll go with a strong ### and the feel that *Rolling Thunder* should sustain traffic well into the heat of the summer months.

These next two reviews are interesting because the similarity between the machines is unmistakable. Also, the games have enjoyed only brief runs, although I'm sure they're still available right out of the carton at many local distributors. Even though the follow-up machines (*Spring Break* and *F-14 Tomcat*) are getting great exposure of late, don't discount the viability of pinballs that preceded them.

Premier's Monte Carlo

At first glance *Monte Carlo* looks like an interesting machine. I have always liked the stargate feature introduced on Gottlieb's old *Mars* and not seen too many times since. Even the roulette wheel hasn't been around for awhile, so *Monte Carlo* appears to have a couple of features that could capture players.

It's nice to have a random feature on a game, but when it amounts to 10 million points, it should be tied into particular targets or sequences on the playfield, rather than just popping up. It's a nice gimmick, but if you're playing seriously against someone and they suddenly gain an excessive eight digit advantage, it tends to cheapen the victory.

Fundamental use of the inner lane targets open a bottom gate. From what I witnessed on location, it would have been a nice touch to have another gate on the left side operating off the left lit target, balancing off the action more than is the case.

The game's primary feature--the roulette wheel--often doesn't register the score. Since the mechanism is on a timer, if the ball doesn't land in a specific cup, the entire exercise is futile, except for the fact that one can lock up a ball on the playfield for potential three-ball multi-ball play.

There are some saving graces; some good ball kinetics on the board and many satisfying longer shots, despite the fact that the scoring might not reflect a player's given success from turn to turn. If anything, *Monte Carlo* proves itself to be a fun diversion for flipper play that isn't too deep or mentally taxing. I'll go with ##1/2.

Williams' Millionaire

One basic problem of this game is the flipper power. If you can't make the shots, which are mostly long range, a frustrated player isn't going to pump in more money. The objective is to lock up the two balls for multi-ball play, but right from the start of play, I didn't even notice that I had a movable ball guide (shades of Gottlieb's old *Volcano*). So my plunger shot (with its center entry) wasn't effective until a friendly operator pointed out that I could manipulate the angle I wanted for the best shot--which actually takes the ball up a steep left side of in-line drop targets.

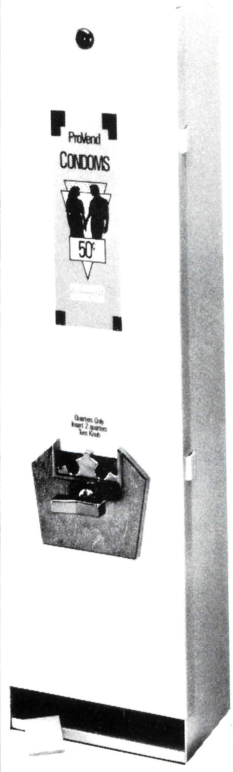
The rest of the game is really one of slam and shoot the ball around with the hope of getting multi-ball play, even though there are some target sequences to spell out for increased bonus rewards.

Maybe the priorities are getting confused in pinball as to what the player is looking for, but I have to believe that manufacturers can still offer some sophisticated, complex play along with the more routine action and get a solid entry that can appeal to everyone. As a filler attraction, with the mechanics hopefully squared away, the machine should generate some excitement for a transient audience, but it's not going to be a compelling attraction for more accomplished players.

I'll go with another ##1/2, realizing that much of the interest is obviously directed at the Steve Ritchie game that blew away ACME showgoers. However, there is an audience for *Millionaire* and *Monte Carlo* even though new games are already hitting the streets.

Next time around I'll go into greater depth with the newer machines, as well as an array of others. Maybe I'm expecting too much in terms of advancement in technology, hoping also that the fundamentals can remain for solid play. There are going to have to be some breaks from the norm that will lead to new, sounder trends. Only time will tell if we're learning and trying to do more to create exceptional games--not just ordinary ones. Until next time, as always...be well and prosper.

CONDOM VENDOR



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NEW PRODUCTS

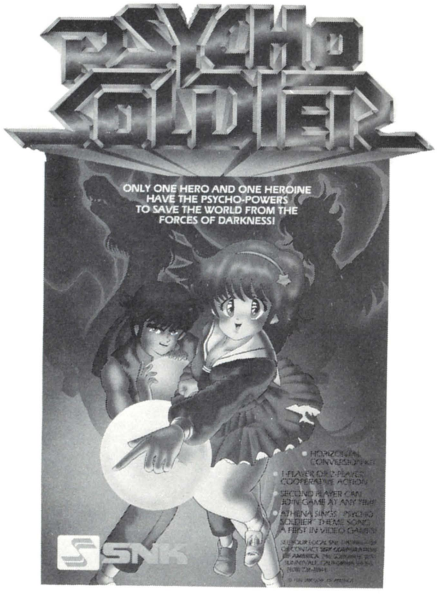
Psycho Soldier

SNK Corp. of America introduces *Psycho Soldier*, a one-or two-player conversion kit (with buy-in feature) for all horizontal monitor videos.

In *Psycho Soldier* one hero and one heroine have the psycho powers to save the world from the forces of darkness. Players use psycho balls, electros, swords, and brute force to crumble rock walls, electrocute creepy aliens, and sizzle other menacing foes. Maneuvering through multi-floored structures, players blast through rock to locate and load-up on special powers.

The next step is to challenge and destroy a mighty creature before going to the next stage. Armed with high levels of wizard-like power, the hero and heroine accept the task.

For more information, contact your local distributor or for referral write SNK Corp. of America, 246 Sobrante Way, Sunnyvale, CA 94086, or call (408) 736-8844.



Suprize Suprize

UAI New Jersey has developed a uniquely shaped merchandiser with an equally unique attract mode of a talking/singing teddy bear in its new *Suprize Suprize*.

The unit is a two-player, pie-shaped crane that may be used alone or in conjunction with several others to create a full circle of eye-catching prizes. The cabinet is molded of fiberglass in a soft blue color.

The claw mechanism is the same as UAI features in its *Skill Crane*. Prize storage capacity can go up to 200 pieces. The 20-inch high teddy bear sits above the prizes and talks and sings to players.

Suprize Suprize is appropriate for shopping malls, arcades, amusement parks, bowling centers, and truck stops, among other locations. As a single, the crane represents a creative way to handle corners that might otherwise remain dark areas or lost space.

For more information, contact your distributor or write UAI New Jersey, Inc., 2400 Belmar Blvd., Wall, NJ 07719; call (201) 681-8900.

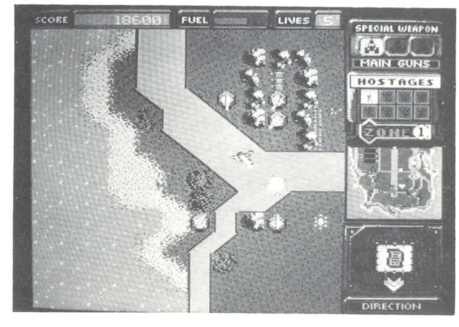
Party Animal, Rescue Raider

Players are invited to "come on down and party" with Bally Midway's newest pinball, *Party Animal*, and experience the thrill of the chase in the company's one-or two-player shooting video kit, *Rescue Raider*, that has 80 screens of game play.

Party Animal features ingenious sound effects, oldie-but-goodie tunes like "Wipe Out", "Louie, Louie", and "Tequila" played on a miniature jukebox, and eye-catching graphics portraying humanized animals participating in crazy party antics. The backglass displays a wolf-on-the-make and a flirtatious pink hippo.

One to four players enter the party and earn a door prize. First they spot all the letters that make up the name of the game by hitting saucers in three areas. Beer steins that spot yellow letters when hit are accompanied by slurping and hiccuping (an optional adjustment for polite crowds); pizza-eating sounds occur when pizza wedge saucers are hit.

After all the letters are spotted, players advance to a surprise party in the overhead



ramp. This is a multi-ball sequence where playfield values increase by as much as three times. In line drop targets, operator-adjusted bull's eye targets, and spotting the letters of p-i-g on the left and o-u-t on the right give added score value. When pig-out is hit, a variable dance bonus is collected and pig squeals announce the award. A second flipper button allows the player to "change lane" letters. A 2x, 4x, and 6x bonus multiplier add to the excitement.

Party Animal includes manual-free testing and self-percentaging, full playfield mylar, and operator-adjustable bonus add-ons. The game's development team includes Dennis Nordman, game designer; Pat McMahon, graphics; Ray Merchant, programmer, and Mike Bartlow, sound engineer.

Rescue Raider is set on an enemy-occupied tropical island of forests, swamps, and plains where several hostages are held in stockades and fortresses. Players must use secret weapons and clues to locate and rescue the hostages. In the two-player mode, players alternate each time one of them is destroyed by the enemy.

Two joysticks are used--one to move a high-tech, anti-tank vehicle that represents the player, and the other to shoot weapons. In the four levels of play difficulty a special weapon is provided for use against enemy tanks, land mines, and armored cars. Players must adapt to each weapon against increasingly complicated barriers and the aggressive enemy.

Sophisticated weapons include a grenade launcher and cruise missiles. In addition, the players' vehicle can become airborne via jet-pack.

The screen is divided into two parts--the largest for game play and one quarter on the right side that resembles a computerized control panel with four different displays. One display shows the sector of the island presently occupied and positions of secret documents and hostages. Others show direction and distance to the next hostage, special weapon in use, hostages rescued and those still waiting. Military theme music and the sounds of explosions, guns, and rockets support game play.

For more information on both games, contact your local distributor or write Bally Manufacturing, 10601 W. Belmont Ave., Franklin Park, IL 60131, or call (312) 451-9200.

Top Draw

SMS Manufacturing has released its latest video card game, *Top Draw*, available as a complete game or as a modular upgrade kit for SMS' *Hi-Lo Double Up Joker Poker* and other games with similar PCB configurations.

Top Draw features include dual bonuses (a super bonus and random bonus), raise feature, automatic deal and draw buttons, jacks or aces minimum win, and automatic replay. In addition, there is an all or half play hi-lo, fast draw, and much more.

For more information or distributor referral, write SMS Manufacturing Corp., 1000 Airport Road, Lakewood, NJ 08701, or call 1-800/221-0138; in New Jersey call (201) 370-3030.

Model 5000 Cricket Darts

Merit has just released its *Model 5000 Cricket Darts* kit for Model 5000 Arachnid dart games.

The kit is low-cost, easy-to-install, and totally updates the entire game. The overhead display unit mounts on the canopy above the target and features bright LEDs for tracking the cricket marks and for displaying scores for all other games.

The original microprocessor for the game's log board is removed and replaced with a piggyback module powered by a new microprocessor. All game software in addition to cricket has been rewritten with new code, resulting in improved performance and eliminating copyright concerns.

A simple cable assembly is included for plugging the score display into the new CPU, as well as necessary decals for the front of the unit.

As part of an introductory offer, Merit is including its catch-ring (in black) that fits around the target and mounts easily without

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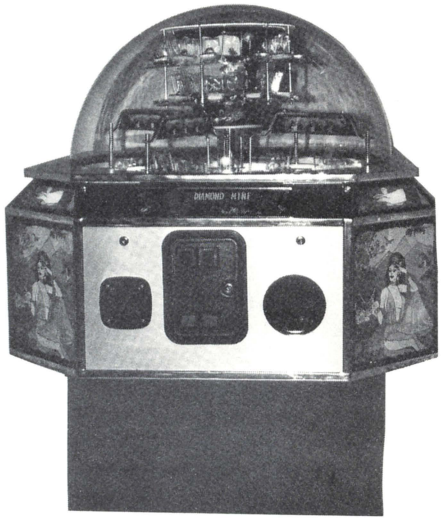
covering any target numbers. A new coin credit system allows players to deposit as many coins as they like and then select any number of players for each future game, an asset for league play.

For more information, contact your Merit distributor, or write Merit Industries, Inc., P.O. Box 5004, Bensalem, PA 19020, 1-800/523-2760. In Pennsylvania call (215) 639-4700.



Diamond Mine two--player

Smart Industries introduces a new two-player *Diamond Mine* rotary merchandiser that features merchandise automatically loaded onto the playfield after a prize has been won.

Smart introduced its four-player *Diamond Mine* last fall and now offers this 34-inch wide unit that has a choice of three game selection programs: nudge arm halfway across the playfield, nudge arm all the way across the playfield, or automatic game arm that moves all the way across the playfield.

For more information, contact either Smart Industries Corp., 1801 Bell Ave., Des Moines, IA 50315, (515) 244-3500; or its national distributor, Central Distributing Co., Inc., (402) 553-5300.

Solomon's Key Tee'd Off

Tecmo introduces a conversion kit for horizontal monitor videos with *Solomon's Key* and a conversion kit for vertical monitor games, *Tee'd Off.*

Solomon's Key is a complex strategy-maze game in which the player maneuvers the central character, Dana, on his mission to free an imprisoned princess, Pamera. Dana is a magical character who uses special powers, including a magic wand and fire button to avoid enemy attacks.

The goal is to obtain Solomon's Key, a gold key that unleashes greater powers and unlocks the door that allows Dana to enter the next level of game play. There are 16 levels with increasing degrees of difficulty. Hidden magical secrets must be acquired to advance to the later stages of play. The kit is primarily for use with cocktail tables.

Tee'd Off is a golf-theme game that uses a multi-directional trackball to give complete player control. It features a 22-hole golf course on which players can use five strokes: hook, slice, fade, draw, or straight shot.

A special feature, the split-screen scanner, gives a complete overview of the upcoming hole and a view of the green in the distance. There also is a variable shot-select button. *Tee'd Off* has a one or two player select button and continual buy-in feature as well.

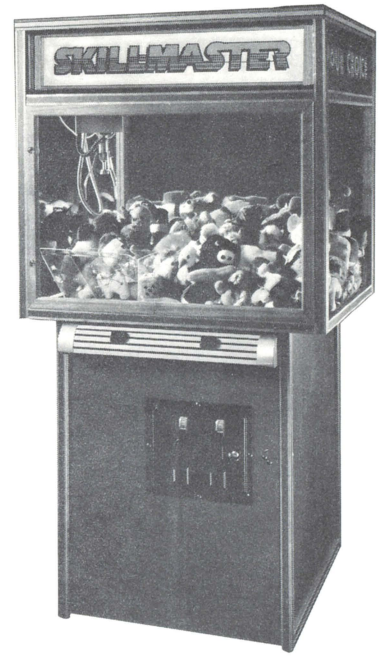
For more information or distributor referral, write Tecmo, Inc., Victoria Business Park, 18010 S. Adria Maru Lane, Carson, CA 90746, or call 1-800/457-6050, or (213) 329-5880.

Skillmaster

Spencer Industries introduces *Skillmaster*, an American made single upright crane with oversized prize area.

The *Skillmaster* is available with button or joystick controls and dual coin mechanism. It comes with a 90-day parts guarantee and one-year warranty on the PC board. Dimensions of the unit are 74 and one-half inches high, 33 inches deep, 39 and one-half inches wide at the top; 30 inches wide at the bottom. Spencer also makes a *Jumbo Skillmaster.*

For more information, write Spencer Industries, Inc., 3575 Investment Lane, West Palm Beach, FL 33404, or call 1-800/433-0601. In Florida call (305) 845-0601.



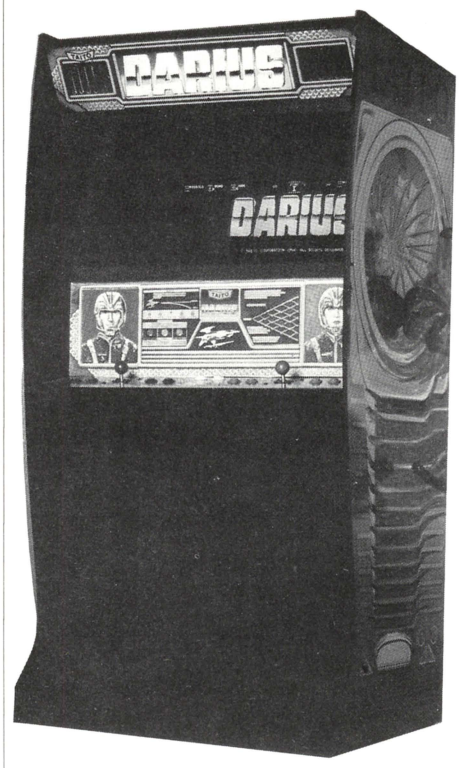
Laser War

Data East enters the pinball market with its first effort, *Laser War*, that features an attention-getting light show.

Laser War has two ramps, multi-ball play, and a playfield offering difficult and easy shots. The game has space-age software and easy-to-use bookkeeping and adjustments. There's also automatic percentaging, switch testing, player point spread, the day's top scores, and more.

This is the first pinball specifically designed for digital stereo. The voice and music are on a separate ROM. There's an all-new chrome speaker enclosure with digital speakers, advanced speech and special effects. It uses standard 50 volt coils.

For more information, contact your local Data East distributor or write Data East USA, 470 Needles Drive, San Jose, CA 95112, or call (408) 286-7074.



Darius, Rastan

Taito America introduces a unique space-theme dedicated video, *Darius*, and a conversion kit with battle-theme, *Rastan*.

In *Darius* players become pilots in the Silver Hawk Squadron and undertake a mission to conquer the enemy using missiles and bombs. While piloting his starship, the player must destroy specified enemy objects and increase the armament of his fighter ships by catching various power spheres of red, green, and blue. Red increases missile power, green increases bombing power, and blue is a defensive shield.

After flying the pattern and destroying enemies, players face a huge space creature that must also be destroyed; then the next battle zone is selected.

Darius is housed in a wide-bodied cabinet measuring 70 inches high, 36.5 inches wide and 29.5 inches deep.

Rastan is a fantasy-adventure-battle game in which the player becomes Rastan, a medieval warrior who defends himself against monsters in a mythical world.

Rastan encounters magical signs for added strength and power. He collects power-up items by stabbing them with his sword. These include an ax for more offensive power, mace to extend offensive range, fire sword that shoots fireballs, jewel for bonus points, and shield to reduce damage from enemy attacks. Formidable enemies include the characters Graton, a helmeted skeletal foe with evil at heart; Giga, a shell encrusted creature armed with wooden club; and Chimaira, a hideous three-headed beast.

During play, energy is lost when coming into contact with enemies and other obstacles. All energy is lost if Rastan falls into water or fire, is hit by the suspended ceiling, or stabbed with ground spears.

There are six patterns of three scenes each that must be cleared by eliminating all enemies and defeating the Castle King.

For more information, contact your local distributor or write Taito America Corp., 660 Wheeling Road, Wheeling, IL 60090; call (312) 520-9280.

Dunk Shot

Atari Games introduces a basketball simulation game, *Dunk Shot*, that allows up to four players to compete in realistic court action.

Dunk Shot comes in a new sport-type cabinet that takes from one to four players. In the two-player game players can team up against the computer or play head-to-head. Game play is seen from a unique top-down perspective that shows all court action at once. The characters enlarge when going up for a slam dunk or jump shot.

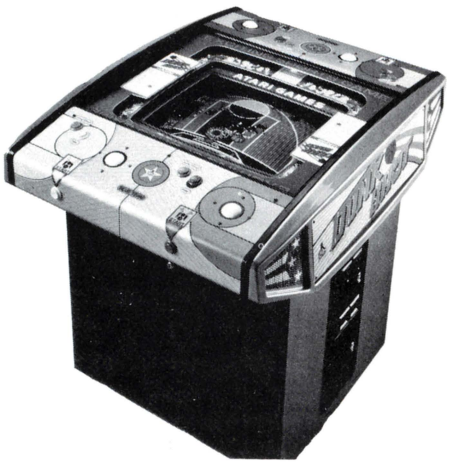
Players maneuver the screen players by use of a mini trakball, jump/shoot button, and pass button. The playfield scrolls as the action switches from one court to the other. Possible offensive and defensive moves include slam dunk shots, free throws, stealing, rebounding, jump shots, passing and fouling.

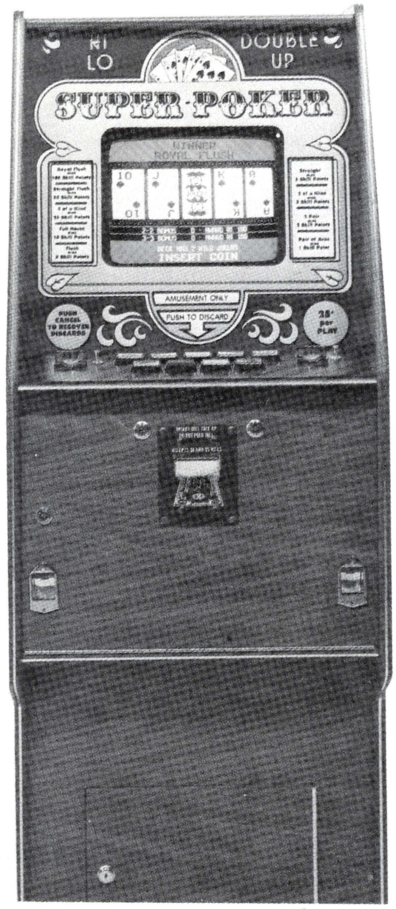
At the start of each game players compete for possession with a jump ball. An operator-selectable timer controls length of the game and a clock counts down as players compete for highest score at the end of the game. In a one-player game, the player competes against the computer.

Other operator options include four timer difficulty settings and four game difficulty settings. Comprehensive bookkeeping information is in the self-test mode.

This game is the first Atari/Sega venture following a licensing agreement earlier this year between Atari Games and Sega Enterprises of Japan.

For more information, contact your Atari distributor, or write Atari Games Corp., 675 Sycamore Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035; call (408) 434-3748.





Super Poker

Grayhound Electronics, Inc. introduces the video card game, *Super Poker*, available as upright or countertop model.

New for '87, *Super Poker* offers free re-deal and a second draw. It also has optional menu selection, selectable cards on bears graphics, raise feature option, progressive feature option, hi-lo feature option, and half bet in hi-lo play.

Adjustable features include minimum hand to win, credits per play, coin for wild cards, maximum bet, number of discards per hand, and bet for wild cards.

For more information, contact your Grayhound distributor or write Grayhound Electronics, Inc., Rt. 37 & Germania Station Road, Toms River, NJ 08753; call 1-800/222-0491. In New Jersey call (201) 341-5200.

Top Choice, Mini Twirl

Betson Enterprises has added several new products to its line of merchandisers and redemption equipment, including *Top Choice* and *Mini Twirl*, large and small units

respectively.

Top Choice is a super single upright crane with oversized eight inch adjustable claw. Button or joystick controls are available as well as optional $1 and $5 bill acceptor and optional prize counter and gum ball dispenser.

Top Choice features an extra large prize viewing area and door to accommodate larger prizes, dual coin mechanism, and removable header for entrance through doorways. It measures 88 inches high, 35 inches deep, and 42 inches wide.

Mini Twirl is ideal for those locations where space is at a premium. A one-player unit, it has adjustable pricing and adjustable speed turntable, a removable base, and adjustable payout percentage. Dimensions are 26 inches deep, 24 inches wide, and 52 inches high with base (28 inches high without base).

For more information, contact your Betson distributor or write to Betson Enterprises, 6 Empire Blvd., Moonachie, NJ 07074; call 800/524-2343.

Freedom Fighter

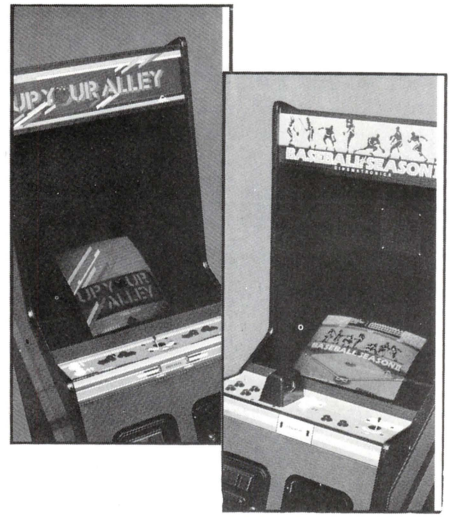
Millennium Game Products offers *Freedom Fighter*, a new video game with unusual features such as non-repeating scenes when a player goes through on a second pass. It features characters from the animated feature film, "Galaxy Express."

At the game's start the player accepts a mission to find Train 999 and destroy the evil Guardian. First he enters a city under siege and must advance to the train station, eliminating snipers, tanks, and other threats along the way. If he loses a life the game resets to a previous path decision point and offers the player a new choice. When there are no lives remaining, players may buy additional lives without returning to the beginning of the game.

The game's overscan technology allows the player to look around within a scene before making a decision on which direction to take. Turning the joystick enables him to look down streets. Threats are varied when repeating the same scene. A sniper missed in one scene will appear from a different spot when the same scene is entered again.

Once the player boards the train there are more obstacles sent his way by the Guardian. Clues to the secret of the Guardian's destruction are given at key game points. The player must plan his strategy well to escape the Guardian's space station alive.

For more information, write Millennium Game Products, 21300 Califa Street, Woodland Hills, CA 91367; call (818) 340-6750.



Baseball The Season II, Up Your Alley

Cinematronics, a subsidiary of Tradewest, has developed two new Cinemat system games, *Baseball The Season II* and *Up Your Alley*, both available in dedicated form, universal conversion, or game module configuration.

In *Baseball The Season II* players can run fast or slow, call for the cut-off, even steal bases when wild pitches are thrown during a game.

The new, spring-loaded joystick offers greater control when pitching. A special feature, the Stat Key, allows players to carry stats with them whenever they play.

Up Your Alley invites players to sample the feel of a full-size alley. Choices include selecting either male or female bowler plus left or right-handed bowling.

Simplified controls give a greater feel for ball speed and hook, encouraging players to go for the "beer frame" or the perfect 300 game.

For more information, contact your distributor or write Cinematronics, 1841 Friendship Drive, El Cajon, CA 92020; call (619) 562-7000.

Tiger Paw

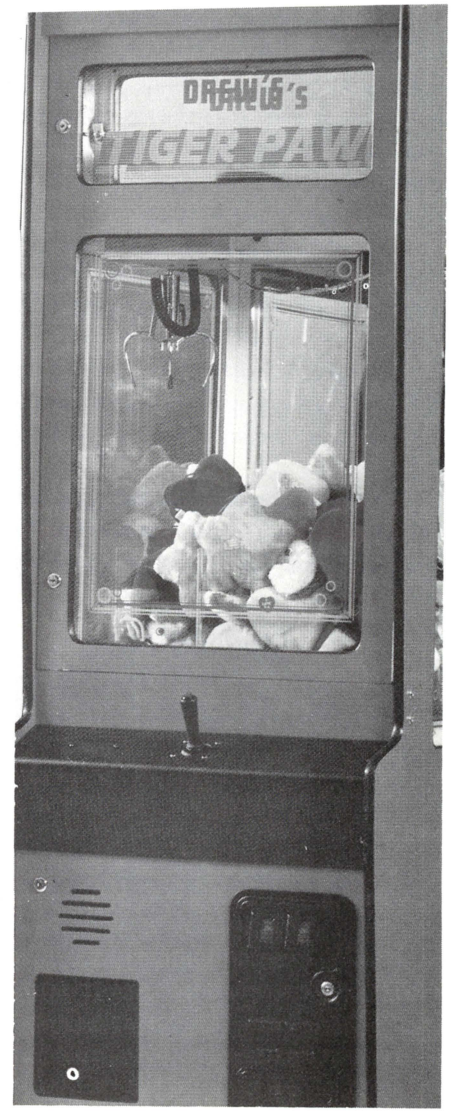
Drew's Distributing introduces the *Tiger Paw* single upright crane with safe and durable plexiglass panels and dual coin mechanisms.

Operator-selected play settings are available on the unit that features coin-in and prize-out meters, separate locking cash box and prize storage compartment, plus multi-sensory devices for security, tilt and chute.

Other features include 3.5 inch locking caster wheels, LED read-out of coins and seconds per game play, and game play options from 25 cents to $1 per game. Choose from joystick or button controls.

The hinged front door has dual locks for security and easy loading. Options include bill acceptor and ticket dispenser.

For more information, write Drew's Distributing, Inc. P.O. Box 632, Fairforest, SC 29336; call (803) 574-0162.



Amazing Photos

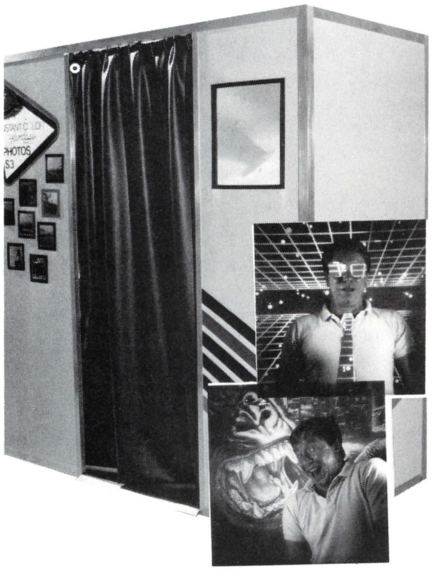
Amazing Photos, Inc. introduces a new concept in self-vend instant novelty photography, the *Amazing Photo Booth.*

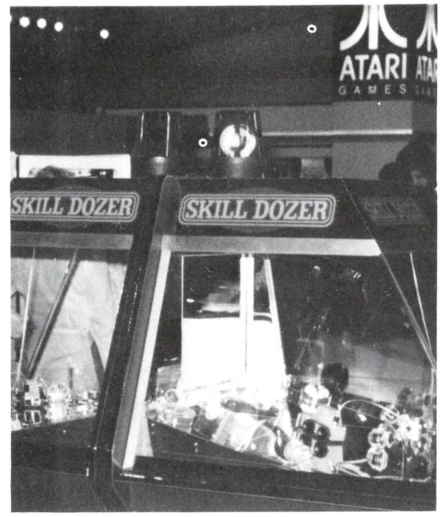
The unit uses a proprietary projection system that lets customers fulfill their photo fantasies by selecting the photo background and creating a one-of-a-kind photo.

The *Amazing Photo Booth* uses instant photography; there are no messy chemicals. The cabinet is constructed of mar-resistant melamine. There are self-illuminated display panels on the unit. It has a fully modular component system and easy access service areas.

There are eight color background scenes with more available. The unit comes with a computer controlled bill collector. Dimensions are 75 inches high, 72 inches long, and 35 inches wide, with a total weight of 400 pounds.

For more information, write Amazing Photos, Inc., 2621 Pico Blvd., Unit J, Santa Monica, CA 90405; call (213) 829-0888.





Skill Dozer

M. Kramer Manufacturing has developed a new slant in merchandising equipment with its *Skill Dozer* that uses a remote-control bulldozer to move prizes on the playfield and direct them to the prize drop.

Skill Dozer may be used as a single unit or put back-to-back for an eye-catching display. The game features dual joystick control, realistic dozer-driving action, sound effects, and flashing strobe. Players buy driving time that counts down on a clock.

Other points of interest include coin-in and prize-out meters, dual coin mechanisms, variable play time settings and operator-selectable play options to accommodate various types of merchandise.

The unit is made in the USA and has a six-month factory warranty. A bill acceptor is optional.

For more information, or for distributor referrals, write M. Kramer Manufacturing, Co, Inc., 1100 Towbin Ave., Lakewood, NJ 08701; call 1-800/631-2126. In New Jersey call (201) 367-7810.

Coin Racer

Multi Tech Communications makes spending money enjoyable and even scientific with its *Coin Racer*, a non-mechanical specialty machine that works on gravity and inertia. It is maintenance free, portable, and educational.

Adults and children alike are drawn to the dome covered field on which inserted coins travel ramps at the outer edge and circle the vortex, making about 40 revolutions, each one spiraling closer to the center. Coins of all sizes may be used. They chase each other, collide, bob and weave, and attain high speeds before spinning into a blur and dropping through the opening.

Coin Racer can be placed in any number of locations, including shopping malls, restaurants, zoos, schools, churches, skating rinks, hotel lobbies, resorts, parks, department stores, bowling alleys, movie theatres, sports arenas, super markets and more.

Fund raising is another application of *Coin Racer.* If a location is sponsoring a charitable cause, it becomes fun to give and the monies collected support a worthy institution.

For more information, write Multi Tech Communications, Inc., 18425 James Couzens, Detroit, Michigan 48235; call (313) 342-7737.

TRADE ACCESSORIES

ROWE BULLETIN

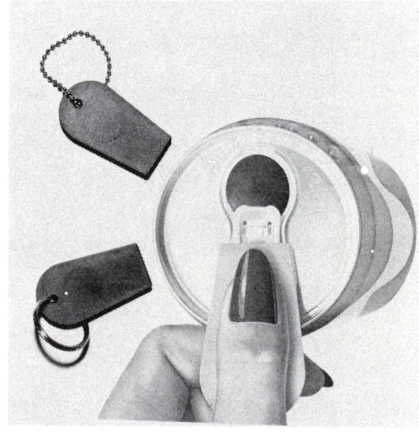
Rowe International Inc. now provides a bulletin with detailed information on its Rowe Video Jukebox including answers to the most frequently asked questions about how the system operates, its capabilities, programming, and availability.

The new bulletin has been prepared in response to a large number of inquiries. According to Joel Friedman, vice president of Rowe, "We've noted the questions most frequently asked and provided the responses in a simple Q&A form along with specifications for the Rowe Video Jukebox."

To receive a copy of the new bulletin, contact your music operator, your Rowe distributor, or write to Joel Friedman, vice president, Rowe International, Inc., 75 Troy Hills Road, Whippany, NJ 07981; or call (201) 887-0400.

FINGER-SAVER CAN OPENER

Denison Corp. announces *Zap Tap*, the reusable finger-saver pop-top can opener. *Zap Tap* is specially designed to fit the finger and pop-top tab for maximum leverage. *Zap Tap* allows effortless opening of all types of beverage cans while saving fingers and nails. And it keeps fingers away from the beverage for greater Hygiene and cleanliness.



Manufactured from polymer material and intended to retail for about 50 cents, *Zap Tap* is the perfect impulse item for discount and department stores, supermarkets, gift shops, and *vending machines*. *Zap Tap* can be custom manufactured in virtually any color with any corporate logo.

They are available with key rings or chains attached, delivered in pop-display jars or in bulk quantities.

For more information, write Denison Corp., 5060 Acoma Street, Denver, CO 80216; or call (303) 337-4701.

JENSEN TOOL CATALOG

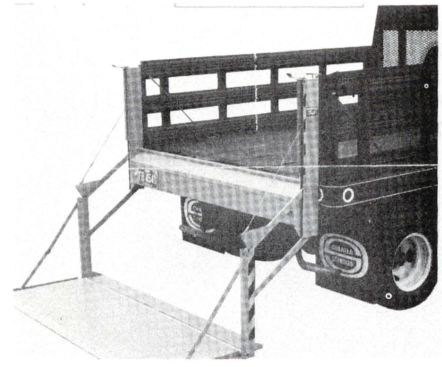
A new full-color catalog, offered free by Jensen Tools, introduces new Jensen service and maintenance kits and hard-to-find tools for state of the art computer, telecom and electronics technology.

The catalog contains new products for work on site and in the field. Included are VCR alignment and communications adapter kits, AT&T handsets, digital test equipment, work holding devices, lighting/optical aids, tool cases, heavy duty military/aerospace transport cases, soldering stations, and power tools, computer accessories, cleaning supplies, and more.

For a free copy, write Jensen Tools, Inc., 7815 S. 46th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85044; or call (602) 968-6241.

EAGLE LIFT GATES

Eagle Lift offers a new line of lift gates for pickups and one-ton trucks.



There are several models from which to choose and all share standard features such as audible safety alarm activated whenever the lift gate is being raised, maintenance-free impregnated bronze bushings at all pivot points, larger pulleys for reduced cable wear, and quick-release sure-hold safety locks that keep the gate secured in the stored position.

The hydraulics include a heavy duty pump with built-in relief valve to prevent overload. A curb side spring-loaded safety lockout prevents accidental operation of the gate. Eagle Lift gates have through-the-ignition safety installation and aircraft industry grade galvanized lift cables.

For more information, write Eagle Lift, 2401 W. Broadway, Council Bluffs, IA 51501; or call (712) 322-1111.

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PLAY METER's classified ads are sold by inch ($30 per column inch with a 1 inch minimum). Prepayment must accompany ad. You may pay by check, money order, Visa or MasterCard. Deadline schedules are available upon request. Send ad orders and prepayment to: PLAY METER Magazine, P.O. Box 24970, New Orleans, LA 70184. For more information, contact Valerie Cognevich (504) 488-7003.

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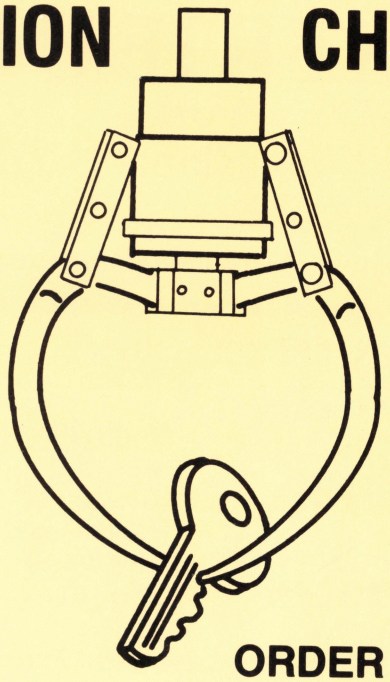

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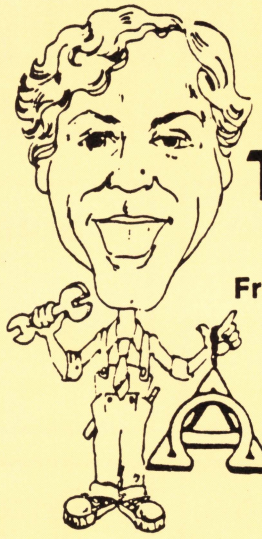

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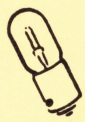

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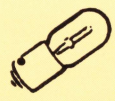

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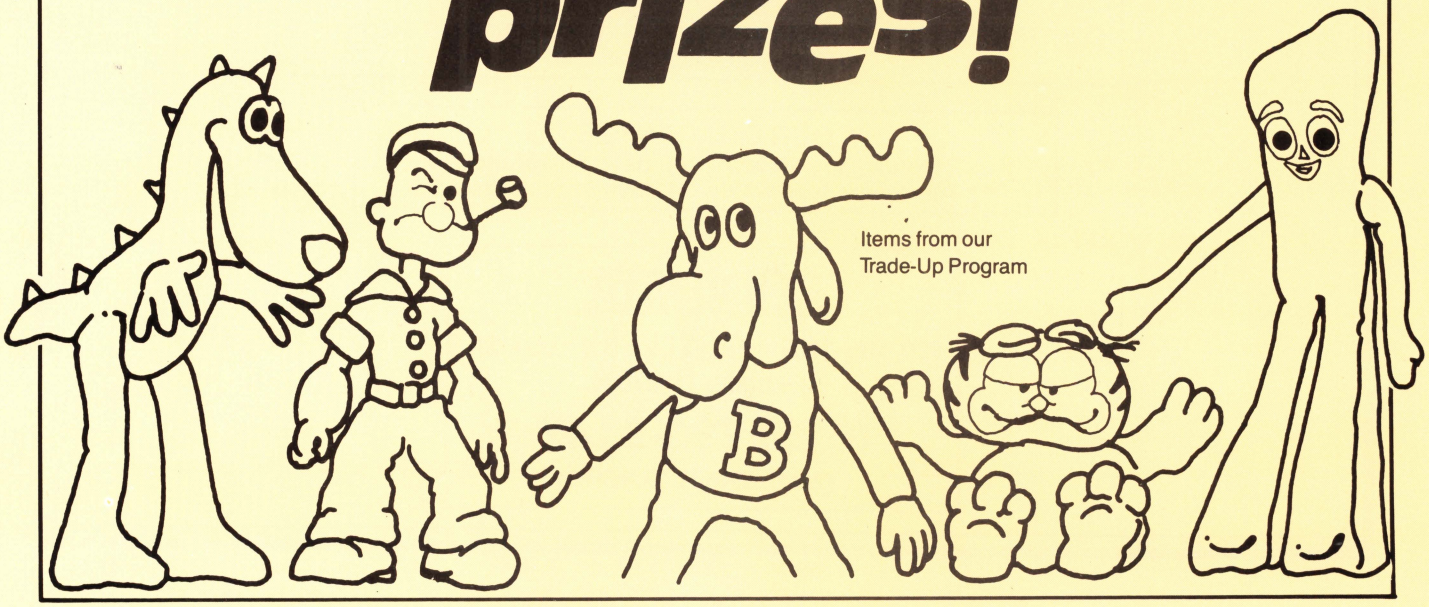

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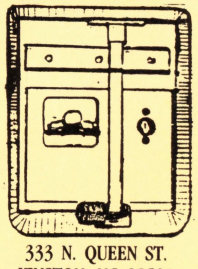
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